

L E T T E R S

TO

Dr. PRIESTLEY,

IN ANSWER TO HIS

LETTERS TO THE JEWS, PART. II.

OCCASIONED BY

Mr. DAVID LEVI's Reply to the Former Part.

ALSO

L E T T E R S

I. TO DR. COOPER,

IN ANSWER TO HIS

*"One Great Argument in Favour of Christianity from
"a single Prophecy."*

2. TO MR. BICHENO,

3. TO DR. KRAUTER,

4. TO MR. SWAIN,

AND

5. TO ANTI-SOCINUS, *alias*
ANSELM BAYLY.

OCCASIONED BY THEIR

REMARKS ON MR. DAVID LEVI's ANSWER TO DR.
PRIESTLEY's FIRST LETTERS TO THE JEWS.

By DAVID LEVI,

AUTHOR OF LINGUA SACRA, THE CEREMONIES OF THE
JEWS, &c.

עד מתי היש בלב הנבאים נבאי השקר ונבאי תרמית לבם

JEREMIAH xxiii. 26.

L O N D O N:

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M, DCC, LXXXIX.

THE T. E. R. S.

DE. P. R. I. T. L. E. Y.

ED. ANNE. TO. HIS.

THE. T. E. R. S. TO. HIS. P. R. I. T. L. E. Y.

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THE. T. E. R. S. TO. HIS. P. R. I. T. L. E. Y.

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ED. ANNE. TO. HIS.

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A N

Introductory Letter.

REV. SIR,

YOUR letters, Part. II. addressed to the Jews, would have been answered by me long before this, but for the reasons which I shall mention hereafter : for notwithstanding your studied neglect of me, by addressing your letters to the Jewish nation, when they ought in strict propriety to have been addressed to me, (as throughout the whole, you animadvert on the proofs that I have advanced in answer to your letters :) and by which, you seem to intimate, that it is beneath your dignity to contend with so *ignorant* and *uncandid* a person. But notwithstanding all this, and

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the threatenings from another quarter*, I am not to be deterred, from what I think is my duty : for having once put my hand to the plough, I scorn to shrink from the task ; especially as it is my earnest wish that a subject of such importance, may be fully investigated. I therefore am happy to find, that you have done me the honor to animadvert on my letters to you, in answer to those you addressed to our nation : no matter as to the manner, although so contrary to my expectation. For I was in hopes that my reply to your first letters, would have led you to have pursued the argument in a friendly and candid manner, according to the method proposed by me, (page 91, and 95,) and which would soon have brought the discussion to its proper termination.

Thus much I thought proper to premise, that you might not impute my long silence, to any doubt I entertained of an-

* Anti-Socinus, alias Anselm Bayly, has in his remarks on my first letters, threatened *to tear me and my Lingua Sacra to pieces*, if I again offer to touch the name, word, or character of Jesus, with profane lips, &c.

swering

swering your letters; but the true cause of this delay, is as follows. First, the important work of *LINGUA SACRA*, which is just completed, occupied all my time; having been obliged to sit at my desk, sixteen hours out of the four-and-twenty daily, as I informed you at the first interview that you was pleased to honor me with*; so that you may easily perceive, I had but little time to spare for any other performance.

Second, the consternation into which the greatest part of our nation were thrown on the appearance of my reply to your first letters: at the same time highly blaming my temerity, in thus entering into a contest that might cost them dear: for having long felt the iron hand of persecution, for the most frivolous and groundless accusations, they consequently dreaded the most distant attempt at what might by malevolent persons be construed an attack upon the established religion, as this hath always been studiously avoided by us†.

* See also my Address at the end of *Lingua Sacra*.

† See my first letters, page 4, and note.

This being the case, no wonder that they were greatly alarmed at my attempt, and naturally feared the consequence. And, although I took great pains to remove their apprehension, by representing to them the real state of the case, and assuring them that we had nothing to fear, as Christians were more enlightened, and had intirely abandoned persecution. Nay, even Christians themselves court the inquiry, as they observe that Christianity *can well bear it*; and therefore urge us to the combat, and which was exactly the case with me in this instance: for I did not begin the controversy, but had only stated the reasons why we could not accept your offers to forsake Judaism, and embrace what you are pleased to call Christianity, consequently, I stood on the defensive only. Yet, notwithstanding all this, and much more to the purpose, I was not able to calm their fears, or reconcile them to the attempt. I then judged it most prudent to leave their cure to time, (which perfects all things,) and that they might in the interim see, what reception my performance

mance met with from Christians in general: and I am happy to have it in my power to declare, that Christians of all denominations seem to approve of the attempt, and wish for a thorough discussion of the subject. This is the unanimous language of all the Christians that I have conversed with, as well as those who have written to me on the subject, both public and private*: and which hath so far had its effect, that although they do not countenance me, yet they attempt not to hinder me.

Third, the strict attention I pay to the rules you have thought proper to prescribe to your antagonists in controversy, wherein you require the real name of your opponent†; and which, give me leave to tell you Sir, was the reason that I put my name to my first letters, although contrary to my original intention. And therefore, as you have been pleased to observe, (page 52 of your letters, Part II.) “ I have

* Except Anti-Socinus, alias Anselm Bayly, John Hadley Swain, and Mr. Cumberland.

† Pref. to Disq. on Matter and Spirit, page 19.

“ made

“ made this second address to you, not
 “ because I thought Mr. Levi’s arguments
 “ formidable. Of this I think you must
 “ now be sensible yourselves : but rather
 “ to show the importance of a defence of
 “ your principles, better considered, and
 “ better conducted, than his has been :
 “ and it is my earnest wish that the ablest
 “ men you have may give their most se-
 “ rious attention to it.”

Now, in compliance with your “ earnest
 wish,” I have waited hitherto, in hopes,
 that some more able pen might take up
 the subject; but as our *ablest men* have not
 thought proper to pay any attention to
 your desire, and have not entered into a
 defence of our principles, *better considered,*
and better conducted than mine was, I have
 again stepped forward, to enter into a de-
 fence of our doctrine, and which I shall
 conduct *as well as I can*; and that you, as
 a philosopher, must be sensible, is the ut-
 most that man can do : for of him to
 whom but little is given, but little is re-
 quired : for I did not so much aspire to
 fame in this controversy, as to give a just
 idea

idea of the Jewish faith, and the reasons for our perseverance therein, notwithstanding all our sufferings: firmly relying on the promises of God to redeem us, when we have fully repented of all our sins. The foregoing reasons have been the cause of retarding the present publication; but which, I hope, will not be the case in our future correspondence.

I am, Sir,

With all due respect,

Your most obedient humble Servant,

DAVID LEVI.

London, Oct. 14th 1788.

LETTER

(7)
of the Jewish faith, and the nations
in perfect peace. I am, notwithstanding,
all our infirmities: firmly relying on
mercies of God to sustain us, when
I have fully repented of all our sins. The
only reason, I have seen the cause of
this, is, that we have not been
in. I hope, will not be the case in our
re-formation.

I am, Sir,

With all due respect,

Your most obedient humble servant,

DAVID LEVI

LETTER

LETTER I.

The divinity of Christ and his pre-existent state, proved to be taught in the Gospels; and consequently, whoever does not believe the same is not intitled to the appellation of a Christian. Hence also the charges exhibited by Dr. Priestley against Mr. Levi, of his want of candour, ignorance of the New Testament, &c. are shewn not to be well founded.

DEAR SIR,

IN your first Letter to the Jews, (Part II.) you are pleased to charge me with ignorance of profane literature and want of candour; these are your words, (page 1,) "I should have been more happy
" if he (Mr. Levi you mean) had been better
" acquainted with profane literature as it is com-
" monly, though improperly called, and if he had
" shewn a little more candour." And page 3, you observe, "It is necessary also to the proper
" discussion of the evidences of Christianity, that
" the Jews should be well acquainted with the
" New Testament, which Mr. Levi is not."

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These

These charges had they been well founded, would have been of great weight, and have proved me to be utterly unfit for the task that I have undertaken; more especially the last: for I am clearly of opinion, that no one ought to enter into a discussion of the evidences of Christianity, that is not well acquainted with the New Testament: though I cannot perceive the necessity of so great an acquaintance with profane literature*: for I am fully persuaded that Scripture, is the best interpreter of Scripture. I shall, however, consider all your charges separately. And first of my want of candour,

You observe (page 2,) in support of your charge, that I asserted, page 9, of my answer to your first letters, that you are not intitled to the appellation of a Christian. "This is a heavy charge, and which as a lover of truth, I am bound to recall as hasty and ill founded; or defend it as just. The latter, is what I choose, though had you been candid enough to have quoted men intire, it would have saved me great part of the trouble: for I asserted (page 8,) that you observed, (first Letters to the Jews, page 41,) that the miraculous con-

* I mean between Jews and Christians: but as to the disputes, among Christians themselves, concerning the UNITY and TRINITY; and when they first began to pay divine honours to Jesus; to pray to him, &c. &c. it may perhaps be of some service, in order to shew the great learning, and abilities of the different writers.

ception of Jesus does not appear to you to be sufficiently authenticated, and that the original Gospel of St. Matthew did not contain it. And that you “do not believe in the miraculous conception of Jesus; and that you are of opinion that he was the legitimate son of Joseph*.” I then proceeded to observe, (page 9,) “After such assertions as these, how you can be intitled to the appellation of a Christian in the strict sense of the word, is to me really incomprehensible.”

This, Sir, is what I asserted, and for which I trust, I have sufficient authority; for your doctrine is so opposite to what I always understood to be true Christianity, as taught in the Gospels, (to the history of which you refer us,) that I think it is almost impossible for the person that embraces it, to be denominated *a Christian*. For in the first place, the Gospel of St. Matthew and St. Luke, as at present received by Christians of all denominations, assert the miraculous conception of Jesus, and consequently his pre-existent state: this, according to your doctrine is false; as you firmly deny both the miraculous conception of Christ, and his pre-existent state: and therefore with one stroke of your pen, pronounce the two first chapters of the present editions of Matthew to be spurious. And, as to Luke, you observe, (Letters to the Jews, Part II. page 10.) “I have shewn that it abounds with the most manifest improbabilities.” Now Sir, what can a Jew

* First Letters to the Jews, page 41.

or an Infidel do more, to overturn the authenticity of the Gospel? for if one part of it is spurious, and another improbable, and that in the most essential part of Christianity. I say the most essential part, for if Christ's divinity is false, and he did not come to suffer for the redemption of mankind, as Christians hold, (whether that redemption was necessary, is not now before us,) he came for nothing. For according to your opinion, he did not come to abrogate the Mosaical dispensation, nor did he come to reclaim our nation from any particular sin, as idolatry, &c. Or denounce vengeance against them in case of disobedience, as we find the other prophets did. And therefore, if the most essential part of the Gospel is spurious or improbable, where are we to draw the line? Or who at this distance of time can pronounce one part of the Gospel to be more authentic than another? the Jew will in consequence reject the whole.

And thus I am confident, Christians in general would argue against the Mosaical dispensation, if the Jews were to cavil about its authenticity, by pronouncing one part of it authentic, and another not. And, here I must take the liberty to remind you of the error, which you have fallen into, and consequently the fallacy of the argument, you have from thence drawn. For you observe, (page 43 of your first letters,) "As you acknowledge
 " any man to be a believer in the religion of
 " Moses, who admits *his* divine mission, nothing

" is

“ is requisite to denominate any person a Christian, but his believing the divine mission of Christ;” and to the same purport, do you express yourself in your second Letters, page 8.

As you here evidently inculcate, that the simply believing the divine mission of Moses, or Christ, is what constitutes Judaism, or Christianity, I must take the liberty to inform you, that if you have no better authority for the latter, than you have for the former, it must appear clear to every impartial person that, by the steps you have taken to prove the spuriousness of part of the Gospel, which teaches the divine mission of Christ, you have forfeited all claim to the appellation of a Christian: i. e. a true believer in the religion of Christ. This, you will say, is harsh language, but the love of truth obliges me to deal sincerely with you. And therefore, I hope, you will not construe this expression as proceeding from disrespect, but on the contrary, from a sincere regard for your future happiness, by leading you into the path of truth, of which, I am confident, you entertain the greatest regard. I must therefore tell you plainly, that we are so far from acknowledging any man to be a believer of the religion of Moses, who (only) admits *his* divine * mission, that on the

* For are not Christians in general believers of the divine mission of Moses, and yet, they are not believers of his religion; any more than the Mahometans are of that, or Christianity; although they allow both Moses and Jesus to have

the contrary, if a Jew once calls in question the authenticity of *any part* of the Pentateuch, by observing, that one part is authentic, i. e. was delivered by God to Moses, and that another part is not authentic, i. e. was not so delivered to him, but he derived it from some other source, as Pamphilus, (which I think is your signature) hath thought proper to assert, (Theological Reposit. vol. iv. page 27, &c.) he is no longer accounted a Jew, i. e. a true believer; but is called כופר, *A denier*: i. e. one that denies the word of God. And is also included in the following sentence, Numb. xv. 31. כִּי דָבַר ה' בָּזָה *Because he hath despised the word of the Lord.* For every Jew is obliged according to the eighth article of our creed, to believe, that the whole law or five books, emphatically called the תורה, is from God; i. e. was delivered by him to Moses: and that there is no distinction (in point of authenticity) between the passage, וּבְנֵי חָם כִּשׁ וּמִצְרַיִם *And the children of Ham were Cush and Misraim*, Gen. x. 6. And אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ *I am the Lord thy God.* Exod. xx. 2. Which is the first of the *ten commandments*. All are equally alike the word of God, and was delivered by him to Moses.

have been prophets, and of course admit their divine mission. Consequently, it is not simply believing the divine mission of Moses, that constitutes any man a believer of his religion, but a thorough conviction that *the whole* of the Pentateuch is of divine authority, as I shall presently shew.

This

This, Sir, is what every Jew is obliged to believe. See Maimonides in הלכות יסודי התורה The constitutions of the fundamentals of the law. And Gemara, Chelek. fol. 98.

Hence you may clearly perceive, what the unanimous opinion of our nation is, concerning the word of God; and that as soon as a Jew begins to trifle with it, by calling in question the authenticity of *any part* thereof, he is no longer considered as a Jew in the strict sense of the word: and in like manner, I am clear, that whoever calls in question the authenticity of *any part* of the New Testament, cannot with propriety be called a Christian in the strict sense of the word. And it is but just, that it should be so; as the real intention of either in making their objections is, to destroy the authenticity of the whole, (although they may not openly avow it) for if *any part* is but once proved to be spurious, a door will be opened for another, and another without end. Hence, if you have any authority to choose for yourself, what part of the New Testament you will believe and receive as authentic, and what not, I can see no reason, why another person may not do the same, and so on *ad infinitum*, till the whole is pronounced to be spurious. And therefore, if once the partition wall is thrown down, who shall be able to draw the line, and say, so far thou shalt go and no farther? The Christian in such case, would be led to disbelieve the law: the Jew reject the Gospel; and the deist both.

Second,

Second, according to your doctrine, Jesus was the legitimate son of Joseph and Mary: but this I apprehend is contrary to the Gospel; so that either you or the Gospel must speak false. For I think I can clearly prove, that the Gospels teach the divinity of Christ: hear Sir what they say. "For the Father judgeth no man: but hath committed all judgment unto the *Son*: that all men should honor the *Son*, even as they honor the Father," &c. John v. 22, 23. "And if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?" *ibid.* vi. 61." "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." *ibid.* x. 18. "I and my Father are one." *ibid.* 30. "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." *ibid.* xiv. 9. "Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me." *ibid.* 11. "With the glory which I had with thee before the world was." *ibid.* xvii. 5. "For he knew what was in man." *ibid.* ii. 25. Nay, do not the Gospels call Jesus God? "God with us." Matt. i. 15. "To feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." Acts xx. 28. See also Romans, xiv. 10, 11. Again, is not Christ exalted above the angels, Heb. i. 6. And called God? "But unto the Son he saith, thy throne O God, is for ever and ever." *ibid.* 8. He is also called the true God. "And we know that the Son of God is come," &c. "This is the true God, and eternal life."

life." 1 John v. 20. See also Titus ii. 10. 13. &c. &c. And the following are applied to Jesus, as expressive of his divinity; because they strongly allude to characters applicable to the Supreme Being only, as John xii. 41. alludes to Isaiah vi. 5. Rev. i. 8, 11, 17. and ii. 8. to Isa. xli. 4. xliii. 11. and xliv. 6. John xxi. 16, 17. and Rev. ii. 23. to 1 King. viii. 39. Ps. vii. 9. Jer. xi. 20. and xvii. 20. Rev. xxii. 12. to Isa. xl. 10.

These expressions, give me leave to tell you Sir, evidently inculcate the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus, and his pre-existent state, in the most clear and explicit manner. Hence it is manifest, that your doctrine cannot be that of Christianity, nor the professors thereof intitled to the appellation of Christians in the strict sense of the word: this I submit to the judgment of all candid and impartial persons.

Thus much I was obliged to say in vindication of my character against your charge of my want of candour, as it fully justifies the expression I made use of in my answer to your first letters; and which naturally arose from the subject in discussion. For as you invited the Jews to embrace what you called Christianity, for the truth of which you referred us to the Gospel, and at the same time asserted the spuriousness of part of the said Gospel, I consequently had a just right to examine a doctrine that appeared so inconsistent: the result of which was, that it appeared to me to differ so widely from the Christianity taught in

the Gospels, that I found it utterly impossible to reconcile the one with the other: and in consequence thereof, pronounced that, the professor of that doctrine could not be intitled to the appellation of a Christian.

This Sir, is the want of unanimity among Christians, that I complain of*; for if according to

* And what is still a greater proof of the want of unanimity among Christians, is, their charging each other with being guilty of *impiety*. This, I perceive, by your own words; for in your letters to Dr. Horsley, in answer to his animadversions on the history of the corruptions of Christianity, you observe, (page 103,) “ You here speak of the *impiety* of the Unitarians. Before you repeat any expressions of this kind, I beg you would pause a little, and consider how such language might be retorted upon yourself. If it be impiety to reduce a God to the state of a man, is it not equally *impious* to raise any man to a state of equality with God, that God who has declared that he will not give his glory to another, who has no equal, and who in this respect styles himself a jealous God? This you say respects the gods of the heathens. But what were the heathen gods, but either the sun, moon, and stars, or dead men, all creatures of God, and deriving their power from him? And if Christ be not God, he must be a creature of God too; for there can be no medium between creature and creator.”

The truth and propriety of your reasoning, is sufficiently conspicuous, and I must freely acknowledge that, the force of it made so great an impression on my mind at the time of reading it, that I was firmly persuaded that, this mutual upbraiding, and want of candour, must for ever remain an insuperable bar to the Jews, (although they had no other objection) and effectually prevent the reception of Christianity among them. For let them embrace which side they will, still will they be accounted *impious* by the other.

And

to your hypothesis Jesus was only a mere man, and did not abrogate the law of Moses, but came only as a prophet, though at the same time he did not admonish our nation to return to God, and repent of their sins, otherwise punishment would follow, as was the case with the other pro-

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phets :

And, this seems also to be the opinion of a certain writer* (who appears to be of your sect, and whose writings you have not thought unworthy a place in your excellent Repository) for the decay of Christianity; for he has put the following words into the mouth of one of his characters†. “ But exclusive of
 “ this, may we not say, that there are so many seeming
 “ contradictions, and a multiplicity of obscure passages in it,
 “ that it looks as if it could not be in its present condition, a
 “ rule of faith; and that Christians differ so much about the
 “ meaning of the texts of their Bible, that reason knows not
 “ what to say to a religion so variously represented. It is
 “ not only the two great camps, *papist* against *protestant*, and
 “ *protestant* against *papist*, who make the religion as different
 “ as black and white: that the *reformed mission* at *Malabar* tell
 “ the *Indians* they must not hearken to the *Jesuits* if they ex-
 “ pect salvation; and the *Monks* at *Coromandel* declare, on the
 “ contrary, to those *Indians*, that they will be damned to
 “ eternity, if they are converted to what the *Danish* ministers
 “ call Christianity: which made the famous *Bramin Padma-*
 “ *naba* say, that it was impossible for him to become a Chris-
 “ tian, till the learned Christian priests had agreed among
 “ themselves what Christianity was; for he had not erudition
 “ and judgment enough to decide in the intricate controversy;
 “ but, exclusive of this, protestants are so divided among
 “ themselves, even the church of *England* against the church
 “ of *England*—*Dissenters* against *Dissenters*—and give such

* John Bunce.

† Life of John Bunce, Vol. II. page 200.

“ different

phets : I cannot perceive for what purpose he came, or had a divine mission * ; or what you would

“ different accounts of the revealed system, that it requires
 “ more understanding, and strict, serious enquiry, than the
 “ generality of people have, or can spare, to be able to de-
 “ termine in what party of the celebrated critics and exposi-
 “ tors true religion is to be found ; and where the controverly
 “ is so dark and various, and the authorized professors can-
 “ not agree among themselves, what can a man of plain un-
 “ derstanding say to it.” Examples without number might
 be produced in support of my position ; but I forbear cit-
 ing any more to avoid prolixity. And now Sir, give me leave
 to ask you, whether you look upon the Jews to be such idiots,
 or so infatuated, as to give up, notwithstanding your salvo,
 which is a mere fallacy, as I shall presently shew, the religion
 given by God himself in the most solemn manner, the like of
 which was never heard, (Deut. iv. 34. and v. 23.) for such
 manifest contradictions ? If you do, I can assure you, you
 will find yourself greatly mistaken : for they are fully con-
 vinced, that the Gospels teach that *doctrine*, the manifest absur-
 dity and impiety of which, you yourself acknowledge, must
 prevent the reception of Christianity, among those that are not
 Christians. (Letters to Horsley page 109.) This doctrine they
 never can receive, consistent with their idea of the *true unity*
 of God, but which must nevertheless be embraced by Chris-
 tians if the Gospels be true : for till you can clearly and satis-
 factory prove the spuriousness of ALL those parts of the Gos-
 pels which teach that doctrine, they must remain in their full
 force, notwithstanding any thing that you can say to the con-
 trary. But, when you have once proved that, why then, there
 is an end of Christianity, and consequently of all disputes be-
 tween Jews and Christians about it.

* Perhaps, you or some others may tell me that he came to
 teach the resurrection ; but to this I answer, that the doctrine
 of the resurrection of the soul with the same body, was well
 known

would have us embrace when we become what you call Christians. In your first letters to the Jews (page 54) you observe, " There is no occasion for you Jews to connect yourselves, with any class of Christians. On the contrary, since you are still to be distinguished as *Jews*, no less than as *Christians*, it will be more convenient for you to form a separate church, and to keep your Sabbath as you now do." But dear Sir, why the Sabbath only? are not all the precepts of the Mosaical dispensation, held by us to be equally binding? Of this I think you ought to be fully sensible. But such a church as you have here described, I think never was heard of, as I verily believe it is neither Jew, nor Christian, and for which I am really at a loss to find a proper name; however, this is what you call Christianity.

Now on the other hand, the Gospel teaches the divinity of Christ, his pre-existent state, and divine mission as already shewn; and also his power to abrogate the ceremonial law. See Ephes. ii. 15. 2 Cor. ii. 7, 11. Acts xiii. 39. and xv. 10, 11. Rom. vii. 6. Gal. iii. 24, 25. and iv. 3. to 8. Heb. viii. 7. &c. &c. Nay, so far do the Gospels teach the divinity of Christ, that it informs us, that it was on account of Christ's arrogating to himself that

known to and taught by the Jews for almost a thousand years before Christ was upon earth, as I have clearly proved against the opinions of Dr. Prideaux, (See Levi's Ceremonies of the Jews, page 261) it consequently, cannot be said that he came for that express purpose.

that divinity, (and which our ancestors, according to their opinion of the strict unity of God, called blasphemy) that he suffered; for no other crime do I find alleged against him: though you have asserted the contrary in your letters to Dr. Horsley. For you there observe, (page 56) “ That the
“ high priest expressed his horror, by rending his
“ cloaths on account of Jesus avowing himself to
“ be the Messiah.” And in consequence of this, you proceed to ask the Doctor (ibid,) “ What
“ would he (the high priest) have done if he had
“ heard, or suspected, that he had made higher
“ pretensions? And if he had made them, they
“ must have transpired.” In answer to this, I must tell you, (and which you ought to have known without such information) that he did make higher pretensions, and that they did transpire, so as to come to the ears of the high priest: and in consequence thereof, he put the following question to Jesus in the most solemn manner, as recorded in Matt. xxvi. 62. “ And the high priest
“ answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the
“ living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the
“ Christ the Son of God.” Here you may plainly perceive, that the high priest did not ask him if he was the Messiah, but whether he was *the Son of God*, as he had heard that he had laid claim to; and the answer which he returned, having confirmed the suspicion of the High Priest, he rent his cloaths: because, he deemed such pretension to be blasphemous,

phemy, as he observed verse 65, but which could not have been the case, had he only laid claim to the title of Messiah. For that would not have been blasphemy; nor would the high priest have rent his cloaths, any more than Jeremiah did at the false prophecy of Hananiah, although in flat contradiction to that which he was ordered by God to announce. And, notwithstanding that Jeremiah pronounced his death as a false prophet, and which actually took place in the same year that the transaction happened; yet, did not Jeremiah rend his cloaths, because it was not blasphemy: although Hananiah pretended to prophecy in the name of God, when he was not commanded. Hence it is manifest, that no other crime was alleged against him, as I have observed. And which is farther confirmed, by the following passage, John xix. 7. "The Jews answered him, "we have a law, and by our law he ought to die, "because he hath made himself the Son of God." They do not say, because he claimed the title of Messiah, no: but because he laid claim to a far more exalted title, viz. the Son of God.

But above all Sir, can any church be called Christian, or the members thereof be called Christians, unless they receive baptism, by being baptised unto Christ? the essential part of which, is to be baptised in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Ghost *.

* Ministry of baptism.

Now,

Now, these things, viz. the divinity of Christ, his pre-existence, and power to abrogate the ceremonial part of the law, as also the miraculous conception, are all taught in the Gospels: and the ceremony just mentioned, points out the essential qualification of a Christian; consequently, he that does not believe the doctrine of the Trinity, cannot be a Christian if the Gospels be true. Neither can we become Christians unless we receive baptism; and which, according to the form of the church, must be in the name of the *three persons*: but which is incompatiable with our idea of the true unity of God: and as you observe*, is drawing us to the worship of *another God* besides that of our fathers.

This Sir, is what I farther thought necessary to urge in vindication of my character, in answer to the charge of want of candour, which you have been pleased to exhibit against me; and which I hope, will also convince you, that I am not so ignorant of the New Testament, as you would seem to insinuate: for I was fully acquainted with the passages which you quote, page 5, and 6. In the selection of which, I think you have been rather a little unfortunate: for they do not prove that Jesus, as a *mere prophet*, prophesied in the name of God, but on the contrary announce him as the Son of God: for the terms Father and Son, are alternately made use of: and which as Christians

* Letters, Part. II. page 54.

assert, is to point out the divinity of Christ, and his relation to the Father. For this, I think, they have some authority: especially, as Jesus appears so willing to let the Jews into the secret of his miraculous birth, and consequently of his being the son of God. Do but attend to his own words, Matth. xxii. 41. "While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, "What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? "they say unto him, the son of David. He saith unto them, how then doth David in spirit (of "prophecy I suppose) call him Lord, saying, The "LORD said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right "hand till I make thine enemies thy footstool? "If David there call him Lord, how is he his "son? And no man was able to answer him a "word," &c.

In plainer language than this, it was almost impossible for him to express himself, in order, as I conceive, to impress them with the idea, that the Christ was not to be the *real* descendant of David in the ordinary course of nature; viz. by the copulation of a man and woman, as the Jews then generally believed, but in a miraculous manner: and that so far from being considered as the *son* of David, he took care to inform them that he was his Lord.

Now, if Jesus looked upon himself to be the Christ foretold or prophesied of, why then, I think, he told them in as plain terms, as it was possible for tongue to express, (according to his

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manner)

manner) *that he was not the son of man*; and if not the son of man, why then, he must be the son of God. For by denying to be the son of David as they expected the Messiah to be, it is manifest, that he laid claim to a more exalted descent, and which I think, it is plain could not be human. What degree of credit you may give to the passage; or whether you may not be pleased to pronounce it *spurious*, or *improbable*, is not my business to inquire. In the Gospel it is, and till you can clearly and satisfactorily prove that it is not genuine; it must stare you and every other Socinian and Unitarian in the face, and plainly shew that, you and they do not understand the language of your and their Lord and Master Jesus.

This being the case, I am not a little surprised, how a person of your profound knowledge in Scripture, could adduce those prophecies, as proofs of Christ's prophesying in the name of God. And I here challenge you, or any other person, to produce an instance of the like language in any other prophet. Nay, I freely assert, that the uniform language of *all* the prophets, is the direct contrary, as no one of them presumed to call himself the son of God: but all delivered their prophecies in one constant unvaried mode of expression, viz. *And the Lord spake, or said unto Moses, Joshua, &c. Or, Thus saith the Lord of hosts. Hear the word of the Lord. The hand of the Lord was upon me, &c. &c.*

And

And I am confident, that you cannot produce an instance of any prophet prophesying in the name of God, acting as Jesus did, to prove his authority: do but attend to his own words. "And
" when he was come into the temple, the chief
" priests and the elders of the people came unto
" him as he was teaching, and said, By what
" authority doest thou these things? and who
" gave thee this authority? And Jesus answered,
" and said unto them, I also will ask you one
" thing, which if ye tell me, I likewise will tell
" you by what authority I do these things. The
" baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven
" or of men? And they reasoned with them-
" selves, saying, If we shall say from heaven; he
" will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe
" him? But if we shall say of men; we fear the
" people: for all hold John as a prophet. And
" they answered Jesus, and said, we cannot tell.
" And he said unto them, neither tell I you
" by what authority I do these things." Matth.
xxi. 23. &c. Mark xi. 27, &c. and Luke xx. 1.
&c. I forbear making any remarks on this proceeding of Jesus to so fair and candid a question, (and which, if as fairly and candidly answered, might have actually led to the conversion of those *to whom he was sent, in the first instance,*) as I have only adduced it as a collateral proof, that his language was the direct contrary to that of all the other prophets.

Hence it is manifest, that my assertion, that I did not find it recorded that Christ prophesied in the name of God, was well founded, in the sense that I used it: viz. that we could not receive him as a prophet, because he was deficient in the essential character of a prophet. And I humbly submit it to the judgment of every candid and liberal mind whether his language was that of the other prophets: consequently, what you have advanced, hath not in the least weakened my position: neither does it prove my ignorance of the New Testament, as I was well acquainted with those and numberless other passages of the like import; but all which make intirely against your doctrine, as I am clear, that they inculcate the doctrine of Christ's divinity: the same as Christians in general hold.

I shall now proceed to take notice of your third charge, viz. my ignorance of profane literature. You observe (page 3,) "I complain of my opponent's want of profane literature, because it leaves us destitute of some common principles, without which, it is impossible to come to any conclusion with respect to the question in debate." What these common principles are, I think you ought to have mentioned; I should then have been better able to answer your objection: but if you thereby mean the proof of the first Christians being Unitarians, or that the Ebionites were not heretics, &c. &c. I must refer you to page 10, and
note,

note, where I have observed, that these things have nothing to do with the disputes between Jews and Christians: the Bible, I contend, ought to be the proper and sole arbiter between them: consequently, I cannot perceive wherein the impossibility of our coming to any conclusion with respect to the question in debate can exist. For the question between Jews and Christians is, simply, whether the Gospel teaches any doctrine that is repugnant to the Mosaical dispensation; and whether the acts of Jesus recorded therein, were conformable to the prophecies delivered in the Old Testament as descriptive of the Messiah, so as to prove their completion in his person. The former, I think, is fully proved by the foregoing; and the latter, I mean to consider at large in my Dissertation on *all* the prophecies concerning the Messiah, in which I intend to take a review of such prophecies as Christians only apply to the Messiah, as well as those which both Jews and Christians apply to him: and which give me leave to tell you Sir, is the course you ought to have taken, as I observed (page 91) of my Letters, and not have referred us to the result of what you call your inquiries into the prophecies in the Theological Repository: for those inquiries do not seem to concern the controversy between Jews and Christians, but more properly Unitarians and Christians, as may be observed from your own words. "All*

* Theol. Rep. Vol. V, page 212, 213.

" Christian

“ Christian commentators and critics have found
 “ great difficulties in this subject. But it
 “ appears to me, that they have arisen chiefly
 “ from the necessity they imagined themselves
 “ to be under of applying more prophecies
 “ to Jesus Christ, than, in my opinion, belong
 “ to him, and especially from not distinguishing
 “ the characters of the *humble prophet* from
 “ those of the *temporal prince*, but applying in
 “ a spiritual sense to the former, what was
 “ intended in a literal sense for the latter: in
 “ which they have too closely followed the
 “ writers of the New Testament.” This asser-
 tion, which seems to be the ground of your
 argument, does not affect the Jews in the least,
 but seems to be aimed intirely against the
 Christians, and the authority of the New Tes-
 tament, the uniform language of which, is highly
 descriptive of the exalted character of the
 Messiah, and not that of an humble prophet:
 consequently, the prophecies that you have
 there cited, do not tend to illustrate the ques-
 tion in debate: for which reason, I shall take
 no farther notice of them at present, especially
 as some of them will naturally fall under my
 consideration, in the aforementioned Dissertation.

You also charge me (note, page 4,) with
 misrepresenting Mr. Basnage concerning what
 he has advanced about the historian Joseph
 Ben Gorion, for you observe, “ Mr. Levi
 “ says,” (page 61, note) “ that Mr. Basnage,
 “ in

“ in his great zeal to decry this work has fallen
“ into a most egregious blunder: observing
“ that he first says, that it was the production
“ of the eleventh century, and then that it
“ was known to Saadiah in the *tenth* century.
“ But this,” you say, “ is a misrepresentation
“ of Mr. Basnage, who, after giving his opinion
“ concerning the real age of this work, viz. that
“ it was the production of the eleventh century,
“ says, that it did not make its appearance before
“ the twelfth, and that the most that can be
“ said is, that it may seem to be referred to by
“ two writers in the tenth century, but that
“ these two testimonies are very doubtful.”

This is your charge, and which give me leave to tell you Sir, is not a light one, for it is no less than wilfully misrepresenting an author of note: but this I think, is what I never have yet been guilty of, and sincerely hope, never shall.

It pains me much, to be thus obliged to enter so often on my own vindication, but the love of truth, which I sincerely profess, compels me thereto. And, in order to clear my character from this foul charge, I shall adduce Mr. Basnage's own words, as printed in the London folio Edition of 1708, now before me. Mr. Basnage first observes, (book vii. chap. vi. page 610.) “ Joseph the Historian, the son of Gorion is one of
“ the doctors that France brought forth in the
“ eleventh century.” But page 611, he says,
“ The author of the *Midraschim*, or Commenta-
“ ries

“ries upon the Chronicles, is the first that seems
“to have *quoted* it: but this author, whose name
“was *Mattenot*, the son of *Nissam*, and who wrote
“at Toledo, is not very ancient. *Saadias* one of
“the excellents of the tenth century, *seems also*
“to have known it.” These are Mr. Basnage’s
own words, from which it is manifest, that my
assertion was well founded: for he does not say,
as you have observed, “that the most that can
“be said is, that it *may seem* to be referred to by
“two writers in the tenth century.” No, there
are no such words to be found there. But on the
contrary, says, that the author of the *Midraschim*,
and who by his own account seems to have been
prior to Saadias, who flourished in the tenth cen-
tury, did not seem merely to refer to it, but ac-
tually *quoted* it. And Saadias of the tenth century,
seemed *also* to have known it. Now, I think it
must appear rather strange, that a book, the author
of which, did not exist till the eleventh century,
should be known to a person that lived in the
tenth, and actually quoted by another who seems
to be prior to the said person. This is a fair
statement, and which I hope will fully exculpate
me from the charge of misrepresenting Mr. Bas-
nage; at the same time that it shews what little
credit ought to be given to the evidence of Mr.
Basnage, concerning the authenticity of the book
in question. But, dear Sir, give me leave to ask
you, whether a book may not exist, although no
proofs can be adduced of its being quoted, espe-
cially

cially before the art of printing was known? I presume the affirmative may be maintained; and that, for the following reasons. First, on account of its being scarce, and therefore, perhaps unknown to the writer. Second, because the subject treated of might not stand in need of illustration from it, &c. &c. So that what you think to be "absolutely incredible," viz. that it should remain so long unquoted, is in fact not at all incredible: but on the contrary, is very probable, and may be easily accounted for, on a cool and candid inquiry.

I am, Sir,

Your's, &c.

LETTER II.

Of the prophetic spirit of Christ, his divine mission compared with that of Moses, as far as it relates to miracles, &c. &c.

DEAR SIR,

YOU are pleased to observe, (page 15, of your Letters, Part. II.) “ that Mr. Levi “ says, page 71, that miracles only were not sufficient to establish a firm belief in the divine “ mission of Moses.” You then proceed to remark, “ But after considering what he urges “ on the subject, I cannot find any thing more “ than miracles to have been necessary.” You farther observe, (page 16,) “ He says, page “ 68, it was God speaking with Moses face to “ face in the presence of six hundred thousand “ men, besides women and children,” “ But “ (say you) what was this but a miracle? If “ there had been nothing extraordinary in the “ transaction, nothing more than what might “ have happened to any other man, would your “ ancestors have believed in him?” Yes, Sir, it was a miracle I grant: but such a miracle, as fully justifies all that I have advanced concerning it. For in the first place, it proves that *miracles only* were not a sufficient proof of the divine mission of Moses. What I mean by miracles, are those that were performed by means of human instrumen-

instrumentality: such as Aaron's casting the rod on the ground to become a serpent; or his smiting the waters to turn them into blood, or to bring up the frogs, &c. &c. Also Moses's striking and dividing the red sea, &c. These and the like, although some of them were great and stupendous miracles, yet, as they were performed by the agency of Moses or Aaron, were not accounted as a sufficient proof of the divine mission of Moses; especially, as the Magicians did the like in some instances. And therefore, the nation might perhaps have doubted his divine mission, from the proof of his miracles only; concluding, that he was only a greater adept in the art than Pharaoh's Magicians. For which reason, God was pleased to deliver the ten commandments himself, in the hearing of all the people, without the agency of Moses, or any other human being. Nay, in order to remove from their mind the most distant idea of any agency on the part of Moses, he was not permitted to be on the mount at the time that God spake the ten commandments, as may be easily perceived from what the Lord said unto Moses; for in Exod. chap. xix. 21. God bids Moses go down and charge the people: Moses in answer thereto, verse 23, observes, that the people cannot come up, because they were already charged: to which God answers, verse 24, "Away, get thee down:" in consequence of this command, we find verse 25, "And Moses went down and spake unto them."

And immediately follow the ten commandments: but not the least mention is made of Moses ascending the mount: for that did not take place till after the delivery of the ten commandments, as recorded in chap. xxiv. 1. "And he said unto Moses, come up unto the Lord, thou and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel," and which is the very same order, mentioned in chap. xix. 24. This, Sir, was the great proof of the divine mission of Moses, and confirmation, that the miracles which he wrought were by the divine assistance, agreeable to what we find, Exod. xix. 9. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever." For thereby they were not only convinced of the divine mission of Moses, but also of revelation in general, as I have already observed in my answer to your first Letters, page 70, &c. And which could never have been effected by the miracles which Moses wrought: but on the contrary, some doubt of their reality would have remained. But this great and solemn proof of his divine mission, was perfectly calculated to remove every doubt*. This being the true state of

* For they themselves were the witnesses of his divine mission, as Maimonides justly observes in הלכות יסודי התורה, The constitution of the fundamentals of the Law, chap. viii. And which give me leave once more to tell you Sir, is such an

of the case as you might have perceived in my first Letters, I am surprised and astonished, that a divine and philosopher of your rank, should stoop so low, as to cavil at my assertion of the proof of the divine mission of Moses, in the manner you have done, (page 16,) as you must have been fully sensible, of the distinction between the miracles wrought by Moses, *and the proof given by God himself*, that those miracles were thus wrought by his command. As to what you observe, (page 17,) "Nothing but a miracle, of some kind or other, could have convinced them that he came from God. But any real miracle would have been sufficient for the purpose." I answer, that according to this mode of reasoning, we must suppose, either, that the miracles which Moses wrought were not *real miracles*, since we find that they were not sufficient for the purpose, as God himself says, *that the people may believe in thee forever*; and from whence it is manifest, that without such proof, they would not have had that firm belief. And this we find to be really the case: for notwithstanding that it is recorded, (Exod. iv. 30.) that when they (Moses and Aaron) did the signs, (and which I suppose you will allow to have been real miracles) the people believed, yet, when they found that they were not directly redeemed, but on the contrary had an attestation of the divine mission of Moses, as is wanting on the part of Jesus; and also proves, that miracles only are not a proof of a divine mission.

their

their burden increased, they seemed to doubt their mission, as may be observed from chap. v. 21. "And they said unto them, the LORD look upon you, and judge," &c. And which is a manifest proof, that they did not then look on Moses to have been sent by God, nor to have done those signs by his power.—Or, that they were real miracles, and consequently sufficient for the end designed, and that God's assertion amounted to nothing, save, the simply exhibiting of one miracle to prove a number of others.

Such reasoning as this, I little expected from the pen of one, who calls himself a Christian divine: but as charity obliges me to impute it to the impetuosity of genius, and the great facility of writing, without a due consideration of the subject, I shall forbear making any remarks thereon; but pass on to take notice of what you object against my asserting, that "Moses himself has told us, in the most plain and intelligible language, that miracles only were not sufficient proof of a divine mission. And for this purpose," you observe, "he (Mr. Levi) quotes Deut. xiii. 1, 2, 3." After you have given my quotation at length, you proceed, (page 18,) "But you will please to observe, that what Moses says, does not at all apply to the case of Jesus. For he did not endeavour to draw you to the worship of *other Gods*." But, if the Gospels are true, as Christians in general alledge: and, as I have shewn, that the doctrine of Christ's divinity,

&c.

&c. is therein strongly inculcated, it is clear, that according to your own words, (page 54,) it is an attempt to draw us to the worship of (another God) besides that of our fathers: and consequently, (as you observe) "we may justly think ourselves excused from giving the least attention to any arguments that may be alledged in support of it." Hence it is manifest, that what Moses said, does apply to Christ, according to the real sense of the Gospels, and that consequently, my proposition was well founded.

And this Sir, give me leave to tell you, is the reason, that I profess to pay so little regard to the miracles of Jesus, as you observe, (page 14,) because I do not think miracles a proof of a divine mission; especially, as Moses tells us, that God might permit impostors to work some, in order to prove us. But, as you seem to lay great stress on the argument, that if God permitted some miracles to be performed, (such as recorded in the New Testament) by which numbers were deceived, "he might have permitted all those recorded in the books of Moses, for the same purpose of deception." (page 15.) I think it necessary to say a few words concerning this position: especially, as I perceive in it a little of the old leaven, contained in the postscript to your first Letters, (page 54,) and for my animadversion on which, you charge me with want of candour. For according to your reasoning, we must either believe that all the miracles recorded in the New Testament, were performed

performed by Jesus by the power of God, as a proof of his divine mission, or allow those of Moses to be also a deception: so that we must either believe both, or you will believe none; for if we say those of Jesus are false, you will pronounce those of Moses to be false likewise: in which case, according to your principle, they may both be false. But, dear Sir, notwithstanding the confident manner in which you seem to have decided on the subject, I must take the liberty to tell you, that our case is not so desperate, as to be obliged to accept of the alternative: because, as I have already observed, miracles are no proof of a divine mission, as shewn in the case of Moses: more especially of the other prophets, an instance or two of which I shall just mention. The first, is the case of Samuel, where it will appear clear, that his being received as a prophet, as recorded in (1 Sam. iii. 20.) “ And all Israel from Dan “ even unto Beer-sheba, knew that Samuel was “ established to be a prophet of the LORD,” was not owing to any miracles which he wrought, for in truth, he had not performed any. But, if you ask me, on what then was the knowledge of his divine mission founded? I will tell you, it was on the accomplishment of the truth of his prophecy foretold, as recorded in the preceding verse to that above quoted. “ And Samuel grew, “ and the Lord was with him, and did let none “ of his words fall to the ground.” For having received a prophecy from God, concerning Eli, and

and communicating it to him, it also soon became known to the nation; and God having fulfilled the words of his servant, all Israel knew thereby, that he was established to be a prophet of the LORD. The same may be said of all the other prophets, Nathan, Gad, Ahijah, Elijah, Elisha, Ifaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, &c. even to Malachi, (the last of them :) none of whom ever appealed to miracles as a proof of their divine mission. And, although some of them performed miracles, as Elijah, and Elisha, yet, was it not in proof of their divine mission, for that was established before : so that the miracles they wrought, were either as a consequence of their divine mission, or for which there was a necessity, as in the case of Moses. But, if miracles *only* were a proof of a divine mission, what must become of those prophets, who never wrought any? Shall we say, they were false prophets? This I think you will not be hardy enough to assert. But the truth of the matter is, they were known to be prophets by the predictions which they foretold in the name of God being fulfilled, as already observed in the case of Samuel. And, this is the criterion, by which the divine mission of a prophet was always proved, as that great luminary Maimonides has observed in הלכות יסודי התורה, The constitutions of the fundamentals of the Law, chap. x. For he there asserts, that the proof did not rest on the performance of miracles, but on the prophet's foretelling future events; and if they

really came to pass as foretold, why then, he was acknowledged as a prophet of the Lord, provided, that he neither attempted to add to, or diminish from the law of Moses. But, if *any part* of his prediction failed, or he attempted to add to, or diminish ought from the Law of Moses, it was manifest, that he was a false prophet, and was put to death accordingly. Hence it is demonstrable that, miracles are no proof of a divine mission; and consequently, your argument founded on the supposition of the false prophet's being permitted to work miracles, is so far from weakening the authority of those recorded in the books of Moses, that, on the contrary, it is the strongest apparent proof in favour of their authenticity, because, Moses himself tells us, that they might be permitted to be performed, in order to prove us.

As to an inquiry into the truth of the miracles recorded in the New Testament, which you so strongly recommend to our serious consideration, (page 15,) I must observe, that I do not think it expedient to enter thereon at present, as being a tender point, and therefore would willingly decline it, unless forced thereto by Christians, in being challenged, either to admit, or disprove them. And when thus urged by them, I promise you; I will not shrink from the task. But, however, I cannot forbear observing, that healing the sick, changing water into wine, walking on the sea, stilling a tempest, casting out devils, raising the dead, &c. as recorded in the New Testament,

ment, are very equivocal proofs of a divine mission; because, the very same kind of miracles, were confidently asserted to have been wrought by the primitive Christians, even as low as the fifth, or sixth centuries, and which were as firmly believed by the fathers, and all other Christians, as those recorded in the New Testament, but which Dr. Conyers Middleton, in his "Free Inquiry into the miraculous Powers, which are supposed to have subsisted in the Christian church," &c. has clearly and satisfactorily proved to be mere forgeries. But which, however, were admirably well calculated to impose on the credulity of the deluded multitude. And it was the same art that enabled the heathens also to maintain so successfully the power of healing diseases; and which was acknowledged by Christians themselves, as Dr. Middleton says. For in speaking of the gift of healing diseases which the church claimed, he observes*, " But be that as it will, the pretence of curing diseases by a miraculous power, was so successfully maintained in the heathen world by fraud and craft, that when it came to be challenged by the Christians, it was not capable of exciting any attention to it, among those, who themselves pretended to the same power; which, though the certain effect of imposture, was yet managed with so much art, that the Christians could neither deny nor

* Inquiry into the miraculous Power, &c. page 76.

“ detect it; but insisted always, that it was per-
 “ formed by dæmons or evil spirits, deluding
 “ mankind to their ruin* : and from the supposed
 “ reality of the fact, inferred the reasonableness
 “ of believing, what was more credibly affirmed
 “ by the Christians, to be performed by the
 “ power of the true God. *We do not deny,*” says
Athengora, “ that in different places, cities, and coun-
 “ tries, there are some extraordinary works performed
 “ in the name of idols, from which some have received
 “ benefit, others harm.” “ But then,” as Dr.
 Middleton observes, “ he goes on to prove, that
 they were not performed by God but by *dæmon*†.
If I should allow,” says Origin, “ that there is a
 “ demon cunning in medicine, called *Æsculapius*,
 “ who cures diseases : yet I would say to those, who
 “ are surprized at it, as well as at the predictions of
 “ *Apollo*, that if the cure of diseases and prediction
 “ of events be things of an indifferent nature, and

* Here is an evident proof, that Christians themselves
 allow, that miracles may be wrought to delude mankind;
 and from which, they infer the credibility of miracles per-
 formed by the power of the true God. Whether they seemed
 willing to allow the validity of those miraculous cures per-
 formed by the heathens, in order to draw so favourable a
 conclusion; or that they actually could not deny or detect it:
 or that they did not dare to detect it, although it was in their
 power so to do, for fear of having their own detected by the
 same means, is not my business at present to determine. It
 is sufficient for my purpose, that they acknowledged it, and
 also drew such a conclusion from it.

† *Athenag. Apol. page 25.*

"which belong to bad, as well as to good beings;
 "shew me that those, who cure and foretell, are not
 "bad, but good, and worthy to be held in a manner
 "as Gods*." The doctor then proceeds, (page
 77,) "Whatever proof then the primitive church
 "have among themselves of this miraculous gift,
 "yet it could have but little effect towards mak-
 "ing profelytes among those who pretended to
 "the same gift; possessed more largely, and ex-
 "erted more openly, than in the private assemblies
 "of the Christians. For in the temple of *Æscu-*
 "*lapius*, all kinds of diseases were believed to be
 "publicly cured, by the pretended help of that
 "deity: in proof of which there were erected
 "in each temple *columns*, or *tables of brass* or
 "*marble*: on which a distinct narrative of each
 "particular cure was inscribed." He also ob-
 "serves, that *Pausanias* writes, "that in the temple
 "at *Epidaurus*, there were many columns anciently
 "of this kind, and six of them remaining to his time,
 "inscribed with the names of men and women cured
 "by the god, with an account of their several cases
 "and the method of their cure: and that there was
 "an old pillar besides, which stood apart, dedicated
 "to the memory of *Hippolytus*, who had been raised
 "from the dead†. *Strabo* also, another grave writer,"
 as he observes, "informs us, that these temples
 "were constantly filled with the sick, imploring the

* *Con. Cels. L. 3. page 124.*

† *Corinth. L. 2. chap. xxvii.*

*“ help of the God, and that they had tables hanging
 “ around them, in which all the miraculous cures
 “ were described*.”* The doctor then proceeds
 thus, “ There is a remarkable fragment of one
 “ of these tables still extant, and exhibited by
 “ Gruter in his collection, as it was found in the
 “ ruins of *Æsculapius’s* temple, in the island of
 “ the Tyber, in Rome; which gives an account
 “ of two blind men restored to sight by *Æsculapius*,
 “ in the open view, and with loud acclamations of the
 “ people, acknowledging the manifest power of the
 “ god. Upon which,” the doctor observes, “ the
 “ learned Montfaucon makes this reflection, that
 “ in this are seen, either the viles of the devil, or the
 “ tricks of pagan priests, suborning men to counterfeit
 “ diseases and miraculous cures†.” The doctor then
 proceeds, (page 79,) “ Now, though nothing
 “ can support the belief and credit of miracles
 “ more authentically, than public monuments,
 “ erected in proof and memory of them, at the
 “ time they were performed; yet in defiance of
 “ that authority, it is certain, that all those heathen
 “ miracles were pure forgeries contrived to de-
 “ lude the multitude. And in truth; this parti-
 “ cular claim of *curing diseases miraculously*, affords
 “ great room for such a delusion, and a wide field
 “ for the exercise of craft.”

* Strab. L. 8. page 575. Amstel. Edition.

† Montfaucon. Antiq. Tom. 2. par. 1. L. 4, c. 6.

Here we have a convincing proof, how far crafty men are able to work upon the credulity of the multitude, in thus easily imposing upon them for true, and miraculous, what Christians themselves acknowledge to be the viles of the devil, or the trick of pagan priests; but which they nevertheless, were not able to deny or detect. And, indeed, there is such a wide field for deception, in this case, as well as that of casting out devils, &c. (and which was claimed by heathens, Jews, and heretics,) that it is no wonder, they were made use of to impose on the credulity of the multitude, or that they should have the desired effect, since they were so admirably well calculated for the purpose: and from whence it is demonstrable, that those kind of miracles, are no proof of a divine mission, since it is acknowledged by Christians themselves, that they may be counterfeited, and yet not be easily denied, or detected.

I shall now consider what you alledge, in order to invalidate my assertion concerning the pretensions of Jesus to the gift of prophecy. In your first Letters to the Jews, (page 19,) you observe, "As a true prophet, Christ foretold the dreadful calamities that befel your nation in that generation," as recorded in Luke xix. 41. To this I answered, (page 87, of my Letters) that, that was no proof of his prophetic spirit, as it was neither more or less, than the vision which the angel had shewn to Daniel, concerning the city
and

and sanctuary, as recorded in the twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh verses of the ninth chapter of Daniel, &c. To this you was pleased to observe in your second Letters, page 21, "The prophecy of Daniel is only general, and that of Jesus very particular, describing the circumstances of the siege, and limiting the time of it. He also mentions the fate of the temple, concerning which Daniel says nothing at all. The taking of the city did not imply the demolition of the temple." These are your words: but never in all my reading did I meet with so many falsehoods in so few lines. For in the first place, Daniel is so far from being general, that on the contrary, he is very particular in describing the calamity of the nation, as he says, "And the people of the prince that shall come, shall destroy the city, &c. And the end thereof, shall be with a flood, and to the end of the war desolations are determined." See also verse 27. This is a more particular description of the calamities of the nation, than that recorded in Luke xix. 41. or any of the other Evangelists. For although he (Christ) mentions the casting up a trench, and which was no more than the natural consequence of a siege, yet, did he not particularize the different calamities that were to befall the nation, as Daniel did. Second, as to his limiting the time, according to your assertion, I must tell you, that I have read your quotation from Luke, over and over, but cannot find any such

such thing therein: whereas in Daniel it is clearly expressed; for there we are informed, that at the end of the sixty-two (i. e. the sixty-nine) weeks, the anointed shall be cut off, and the city, &c. destroyed by the people of the prince, &c. so that the war was to commence at the end of the sixty-ninth week, and continue till the end of the seventieth, when the city, &c. were to be finally destroyed. Hence it is manifest, that nothing can be clearer than this limitation; whereas nothing of the kind is to be found in the passage you have quoted from Luke. Third, you observe, "He (Christ) also mentions the fate of the *temple*, concerning which Daniel says "nothing at all. The taking of the city did not "imply the demolition of the temple." Gracious God! Can any thing be falser than this assertion? for does not Daniel expressly say, (chap. ix. 26.) "And the people of the prince that shall come, "shall destroy the city, and the SANCTUARY." Now, Sir, every person in the least conversant in sacred writ knows, that, *the sanctuary* denotes the temple; and therefore, I am not a little surprised, that you should be ignorant of it. But, was it actually ignorance that led you to make this false assertion? Or was it a wilful intention to misrepresent Scripture, in order to mislead your readers? Charity forbids me to think the latter. But, when I consider, that in the passage quoted by you from Luke, there is not the least mention

made of the destruction of the temple*, I am really staggered in my opinion, and know not which to attribute it to. Yet, I can hardly be persuaded to impute it to ignorance, in a person of your profound learning and knowledge in both sacred and profane literature. I know, that, in your disputes with Christians, (i. e. Trinitarians, or idolaters, as you sometimes call them,) you have been charged “with slandering them; and “that to serve a turn, you would not scruple to “believe even your most conscientious neighbours†.” But this I can scarcely believe, neither can I harbour any such uncharitable thoughts towards you; and therefore, am loth to impute it to a designed misrepresentation of Scripture, in order to mislead your readers: for that would be a crime of a very deep dye indeed. If, however, I must at all events, impute it to ignorance, it undoubtedly furnishes us with a very useful lesson; I mean, a striking instance of the fallibility of man, not-

* As to the passages in Matth. xxiv. 15. and Mark xiii. 14. where the *temple* is mentioned, it is plain from the words of Jesus, that he meant no more than the accomplishment of Daniel’s prophecy, as he says, “When ye therefore shall “see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel “the prophet, stand in the holy place.” Now, Sir, can there be a clearer proof than this, that the prophecy of Daniel was known to Jesus? and who no doubt learned it, as the other learned Jews did, by their acquaintance with Scripture: for it is so plainly described in Daniel, that he that runs, may read.

† Socinianism brought to the Test, by J. Macgowan, page 4.

withstanding all his boasted knowledge, philosophy, &c. For it is manifest, that, while you were charging me with ignorance of the New Testament, though without the least foundation in truth, as I have shewn, you have laid yourself open in such a manner, as to stand fairly convicted of ignorance of the Old Testament: or what is worse, wilfully misrepresenting it. This, fully verifies the expression of Solomon, חָפַר גִּמְצָא בּוֹ יָפֵל “He that diggeth a pit, shall fall into it.” Before I quit this head, I must say a few words, which is, that even if your proposition had been well founded, so that Daniel had actually omitted mentioning the temple, and Jesus had described the exact limitation, it would nevertheless not have amounted to a full proof of his divine mission: because, I have never yet met with any simple and clear proof, founded on substantial and undeniable arguments, that the three former Gospels were published, or written, before the destruction of Jerusalem; consequently, whatever is contained therein, cannot be produced as proofs of prophecy concerning that event. But, as I have already shewn, we are under no necessity of having recourse to that expedient for settling the point in question.

You say, page 25, “I shall now consider what
 “Mr. Levi has alledged to prove that Jesus can-
 “not be received as a true prophet of God, on
 “account of his having contradicted what had
 “been advanced by preceding prophets, and

“ especially by Moses the greatest of them. He
“ quotes for this purpose, Deut. iv. 2. and xiii. 1.
“ *Ye shall not add unto the word which I command*
“ *you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, &c.*
“ Whereas Christians hold that Jesus had power
“ to abolish the Mosaical dispensation, and which,
“ they say, he actually did.” You then proceed
to observe, “ But has Mr. Levi proved from
“ the New Testament, that Christ *did* annul the
“ law of Moses? What some Christians have
“ thought on this subject, is no more to the
“ purpose, than their believing the doctrine of
“ the Trinity. I have shewn in my former Let-
“ ters, that Christ and the apostles, asserted the
“ perpetual obligation of the law of Moses. You
“ may see my thoughts on this subject at large,
“ in the *Theological Repository*, under the signature
“ HERMAS, Vol. V. page 403.” Agreeable to
your intimation, I attentively perused that part of
the *Theological Repository*, and must freely ac-
knowledge, that in the proofs brought from the
Old Testament, I heartily agree with you, as I am
confident, that no passage in the law, or prophets,
will bear any such construction, as Christians in
general make use of on that subject. But, I must
tell you plainly, that I am not so well satisfied
with what you have advanced of the apostles,
with respect to the Jewish ritual; because, you
have not considered the most material passages in
the New Testament, and which seem as fully to
inculcate the abrogation of the law of Moses, as
others

others that I have adduced to the doctrine of the Trinity. Whether you will allow them to be genuine, or only interpolations, is not my business at present to inquire. I have only to produce them, to shew that they are in the New Testament. What your reason was for not taking notice of them, is best known to yourself: I hope it was not ignorance of them, for if so, the Jew whom you are pleased to charge with ignorance of the New Testament, will be found to be better acquainted with it, than yourself. But to the point, Paul in his epistle to the Ephesians, chap. ii. 15. speaking of what Christ had done, says, "Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even "the law of commandments, contained in ordinances, for to make in himself of twain, one "new man, so making peace." And, in his epistle to the Romans, chap. vii. 4. he says, "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become "dead to the law by the body of Christ, &c." And verse 6. "But now we are delivered from "the law, that being dead, wherein we were "held; that we should serve in the newness of "spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." In the acts of the apostles, chap. xiii. 38, 39. Paul, after expatiating on the exalted character of Jesus, who he says, saw no corruption, observes, "Be it known unto you therefore, men and "brethren, that through this man is preached "unto you forgiveness of sins. And by him all "that believe are justified from all things, which
" ye

"ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." In his epistle to the Galatians, chap. iii. 24, 25, he says, "Wherefore, the law was our school-master *to bring us* unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a school-master." In his epistle to the Colossians, in speaking of Christ's having forgiven their sins, he says, "Blotting out the hand writing of ordinances, that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross." And verse 16. "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath *days*." In his epistle to the Hebrews, speaking of the change of the priesthood, he says, chap. vii. 12. "For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law."

From these passages contained in the New Testament, we may draw the following conclusions. First, that the apostles inculcated the *abolishment* of the Mosaical dispensation. Second, that the law of Moses was held by them, not to be capable of effecting the justification of mankind, but that faith, or the newness of spirit, was capable of effecting it. Third, that the law was therefore, but as a school-master to bring them to Christ, consequently, when he was come, there was no farther occasion for it, as the apostle observes. Fourth, that as the priesthood was changed (ac-

cording

according to Paul) there consequently was a necessity for a change of the law also, as he observes*. Fifth, from the exalted character given of Christ, his power to forgive sins, and abolish the law, &c. it is manifest, that Paul did not look upon Jesus as a mere man, but that under cover of these expressions, he endeavoured to inculcate his divinity. From these inferences, it will appear clear to every impartial mind, that Christians are justified in maintaining the abrogation of the law of Moses; for the apostle's words are so decisive, as not to admit of the least doubt. Whether Christ had power to annul the law is not now before us, as you do not admit of it. My business was only to shew that, the New Testament taught us that, Christ *did* annul the law of Moses; and if so, we could not receive him as a prophet, according to my quotation from Deut. iv. 2. and xiii. 1. Be-

* Since writing the above, I chanced to look into the second Volume of the Theological Repository, where I met with the Observations of PAULINUS, concerning Melchizedec, and who does not seem to approve of Paul's inferences drawn from the account given of him in the Old Testament; neither does he seem to allow of the abrogation of the law of Moses, as I apprehend. Yet, was I agreeably surprised to find that, he draws the same conclusion from these inferences, as I have. His words are so much to the purpose, that I cannot forbear transcribing them. Speaking of the change of the priesthood which Paul mentions, he observes, (page 287,)

"And what is this, but to make an intire change in the constitution of the law itself, which is the same thing as its being formally abrogated, and argues its imperfection? For had it been a perfect institution, it would always have been kept in force."

cause

cause, he contradicted what Moses had said, as I observed in my first Letters. And therefore, when you observe, (page 26,) " But this (the abrogation of the law of Moses) is no part of the argument between you and me ; but, like that concerning the doctrine of Trinity, between me and other Christians." I must tell you plainly, that you labour under a very great mistake, or what is worse, attempting to evade the force of my argument by such an evasion. For give me leave to tell you, Sir, both that, and the doctrine of the Trinity, are a part of the argument between you and me, as well as between me and other Christians. For if the New Testament teaches the doctrine of the Trinity, Christ's divinity, &c. (and which I presume I have sufficiently proved in the first of these letters) why then, it is manifest that, we could not receive him, without being hostile to the law of Moses, consistent with our idea of the strict unity of God.

And, if it also inculcates the abrogation of the law of Moses, as by this time I suppose you are convinced it does, from the aforecited texts, we could neither receive him as a true prophet; because, we hold the perpetuality of the law of Moses, and to which nothing is to be added or diminished by any succeeding prophet whatever. This, naturally leads me to take notice of what you farther observe, page 26. You say, " I am satisfied, however, that Mr. Levi has mistaken the sense of Moses in the passage he quotes. It is not there

“ there said, or intimated, that God would never,
“ *by any future prophet*, make any change in what
“ he had enjoined by Moses. He only warns
“ them, that is, the people in general, who had no
“ particular instruction from God, not to add to
“ the law, or to take from it, that is, without au-
“ thority from him.” And a little lower you ob-
serve, “ It is evident, therefore, that the words of
“ Moses are not to be interpreted as they are by
“ Mr. Levi.” By this you would seem to insinuate, that I do not understand the Old Testament; as according to your assertion it would appear, as if none of the learned Jews understood it in the same sense that I do; and that you consequently, had just cause to desire *our ablest men*, to enter into a defence of our principles, *better considered*, and *better conducted*, than mine has been, as I seemed so ill qualified for the task. What it was that induced you to be so very desirous of changing your antagonist, by thus continually urging my insufficiency for the task, is best known to yourself. In me it would be presumption to attempt to point it out, for which reason I shall decline it. But, what will you say, and the public think, when I shall shew, that this charge (my ignorance of the true meaning of the Old Testament) is equally ill founded, as the rest that you have exhibited against me: for not only the learned Jews in general interpret it in the same manner; but the most eminent of them, even Maimonides himself, understands it in the same sense, as may be observed in

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the ninth article of the fundamentals of the law, where he observes, as follows, והוא כי זאת התורה היא תורת משה רבינו ע"ה. לא תהיה נסוחה ולא נחלפת, ולא תבא תורה מאת הבורא וזולתה, ולא תהיה בה תוספת ולא גרעון, לא בכתוב ולא בפירוש, שנאמר לא תוסיף עליו ולא תגרע ממנו. "And that is, that this law, is the

"law of Moses our master, on whom be peace; "it will never be removed, or exchanged: neither "will there ever be any law from the creator besides it: nor will there be any addition to it, "or diminution from it," as it is said, "THOU "SHALT NOT ADD THERETO, NOR SHALT THOU "DIMINISH FROM IT." And in ספר המדע הלכות

The book of Science, the constitutions of the fundamentals of the law, chap. ix.

he observes, דבר ברור ומפורש בתורה שהיא מצוה עומדת לעולם, ולעולמי עולמים, אין לה לא שינוי, ולא גירעון, ולא תוספות, שנאמר לא תוסיף עליו ולא תגרע ממנו, ונאמר והגגלות לנו ולבנינו עד עולם לעשות את כל דברי התורה הזאת, הא למדת שכל דברי התורה מצוין אנו לעשות עד עולם, וכן הוא אומר חקת עולם לדורותיכם, ונאמר לא בשמים היא, הא למדת שאין נביא רשאי לחדש דבר מעתה לפיכך אם יעמוד איש בין מן האומות בין מישראל ויעשה אות ומופת ויאמר שה"ל לחלו להוסיף מצוה או לגרוע מצוה, או לפרש במצוה מן המצות פירוש שלא שמענו ממושה, או שאמר שאותן המצות שנצטוו בהן ישראל אינן לעולם ולדורי דורות, אלא מצוה לפי זמן, הרי זה נביא שקר, שהרי בא להכחיש נבואתו של משה ומיתתו בחנק, על שהויד לדבר בשם ה' אלהי לא צוהו, שהוא ברוך שמו צוה למשה שהמצוה הזאת לנו ולבנינו עד עולם, ולא איש אל ויכזב.

"It is a clear and explained thing in the law, "that it is a commandment that continueth "perpetually,

“perpetually, and for ever and ever. It hath
 “no change, diminution, or addition; as it is
 “said, THOU SHALT NOT ADD THERETO, NOR
 “SHALT THOU DIMINISH FROM IT. And it is
 “said, those things which are revealed belong to
 “us, and our children for ever, that we may do
 “all the words of this law*. Behold, (hence)
 “you may learn, that we are commanded to per-
 “form all the words of the law for ever. And
 “thus he also (Moses) saith, It shall be a per-
 “petual statute for your generations†. And it
 “is said, it is not in heaven‡. Behold, (hence)
 “you may learn, that no prophet hath power to
 “add (any thing) new from this time, (i. e.
 “from the time the law was given.) And there-
 “fore, if any man should arise, whether it be
 “among the nations, or in Israel, and should
 “perform a sign, or a wonder, and say, that the
 “LORD hath sent him to add a commandment,
 “or do diminish a commandment, or to explain
 “any one of the commandments in a manner,
 “that we had not heard from Moses, or should
 “say, that the commandments which Israel were
 “commanded (to keep) were not perpetual, and
 “from generation to generation, but were only
 “temporary; behold, that is a false prophet, for
 “lo, he cometh to destroy the law of Moses, and
 “his death (is) by strangling; because he hath

* Deut. xxix. 29.

† Levit. iii. 17. and Numb. xv. 15, &c.

‡ Deut. xxx. 12.

“dealt presumptuously by speaking in the name
 “of God what he did not command him: for
 “he, blessed be his name, commanded Moses,
 “that this commandment (the law) was for us
 “and our children for ever: and God is not a
 “man that he should lie*.” And this is the
 unanimous opinion of almost all the Rabbins
 concerning the perpetual obligation of the law
 of Moses, and which they all ground on the very
 passage which I have quoted: so that if I have
 mistaken the sense of Moses, why then, all the
 Rabbins have done the same: and I cannot help
 observing, that it is not a little surprising, that
 Dr. Joseph Priestley, a rational Christian, should
 understand the sense of Moses better than all the
 learned Jews†. Nay, I may say, than the whole
 nation; for is it not one of the articles of our
 faith? and with which you ought to have been
 well acquainted before you attempted to convert
 us. It is as follows, “I believe with a firm and
 “perfect faith, that this law will never be ex-
 “changed, nor will there be another law from
 “the Creator, blessed be his name.” This is
 likewise founded on the same text. From all

* Numb. xxiii. 19.

† This reminds me of your disputes with Christians, in
 which you tell them, this passage of the New Testament is
 spurious, that is interpolated, this you do not understand, and
 that is not the true sense according to the Greek, &c. &c.
 From whence it is to be inferred, that you only possess the
 true key of Scripture knowledge.

which it is manifest, that if I have erred in the interpretation of the words of Moses, the whole nation hath done the same, and which I think is more than you intended to prove.

From the foregoing passages, may also be proved the futility of the argument you make use of, page 29, concerning divorcements, where you observe, "But could not the same power which gave the permission, revoke it at his pleasure?" Yes Sir, he certainly could; but as he had once told us by the hand of his servant Moses, whose proof of a divine mission was never experienced by any other prophet, that the law was to be perpetual; (and which you also acknowledge,) and, that nothing was to be added to it, or diminished from, it is plain, as above shewn, that whoever attempted to revoke any part thereof, was accounted a false prophet: so that according to your argument, it is clear that, we could not receive Jesus as a prophet, because he contradicted Moses, in revoking what he had commanded. This, I apprehend, is also a full answer to what you observe, page 30. "But if what Jesus ordered *had* been a change in the law, surely he who could heal the sick by the word of speaking, shewed that he was authorised to do it." For as I have shewn that, no prophet had power to change, add to, or diminish ought from the law; and as you do not allow Jesus to be more than a mere prophet; and as his proof of a divine mission did not equal that of Moses, it is manifest, that he had

had no authority to change the law, notwithstanding his healing the sick, as you assert.

You observe (page 30.) "Mr. Levi also charges it as a contradiction to Moses, (page 26,) "that Jesus did not pronounce sentence of death "on the woman taken in adultery." Good God! is it possible to conceive, that a philosopher and a lover of truth as you profess yourself to be, could be guilty of thus misrepresenting the words of an opponent in order to draw a false conclusion from them. Forbid it philosophy—forbid it truth.—That you have done so, is plain; for nothing like what you have asserted, is to be found in my words, which are as follow*. But Jesus acted in direct contradiction to the law of Moses; for whereas, the law of Moses commands the adulterer and adulterers to be put to death, as mentioned Levit. xx. 10. Jesus in defiance of this express commandment, rescues the adulterers from the just punishment due to her crime: and that, by one of the most extraordinary devices, that ever entered into the mind of man, &c. Now, here is no charge of his not pronouncing *sentence of death on the woman*; for I am sensible that he had no such power, no more than they that brought her, as you observe; but what I observed was that, he did not act conformable to the law of Moses; for he ought not to have intimidated the witnesses, or those that brought her; for that was contrary to the law, as expressed Deut. xvi. 19. "Thou shalt not respect

* Page 26th, first edition, and 30th, 2d Edition.

"persons."

“ persons.” But he ought to have advised them to act according to the law of Moses, which in all accusations says, “ Thou shalt enquire, and make search.” &c. Ibid. xiii. 14. xvii. 4. &c. He therefore ought to have bade them carry her before the proper judge, (as he was not one) and there let the witnesses be carefully examined, as the law has commanded, and, if the woman is found guilty, let her receive the due reward of her iniquity: but, if she is innocent, and has been wrongfully accused, why then, her accusers will meet with theirs, as the law says, “ Then he shall do unto him, as he thought to have done unto his brother: so shalt thou put away evil from among you.” Ibid. xix. 19. In this case, truth would have come to light; the law put in force; the innocent cleared; and the guilty justly punished. This would have been acting with propriety, conformable to the law of Moses, and would have effectually prevented his enemies from being able to accuse him of any thing whatever. Whereas by the part Jesus acted, both the accusers and the accused were suffered to escape; if this is not rescuing the adulterers in defiance of the express command of the law of Moses, I know not what is. But, it is not charging Jesus with not pronouncing sentence of death against the woman, because, that was none of his business, neither can I perceive by the text, that they required any such thing of him, notwithstanding what another of my antagonists* has as-

* Dr. Krauter.

serted, for he observes, (page 14) "Now the request of the scribes and pharisees being that Jesus should upon their own word condemn the woman." But no such thing is to be found in the text: for they only told him that the woman was apprehended in the commission of adultery, and that the law of Moses commanded such to be stoned; at the same time simply asking him, "But what sayest thou?" This, by no means implies a request that, Jesus would pronounce sentence of death against the woman; but only a desire of being informed of his opinion, and whether it coincided with the law of Moses, and they being convinced by the part he took that it did not, they left him. This appears to me to be the true state of the case, as far as I can gather from the text.

As to what another* of my opponents asserts, (page 41.) "I wonder what Mr. Levi would have had the merciful Redeemer *who came not to condemn the world, but to save the world*, to have done in the present case," does not at all affect my argument: because, we were not considering Christ in the character of *the merciful Redeemer*, but only in that of a prophet; and as such, (being no temporal judge) he had no right to condemn, acquit, rescue, or pardon the woman, as above shewn. As to what he observes page 44, "Are penal laws of so rigid and inflexible a nature, that in no case and under no circumstances a mitigation is ad-

* Rev. John Hadley Swain.

"missible,

“missible, or must punishment be always inflicted
“as the severity of the law prescribes?” I answer, in cases of this nature it undoubtedly must, for the law is explicit; as it says, “The adulterer
“and the adulteress SHALL SURELY BE PUT TO
“DEATH.” And, as by the law of Moses, there was no power deputed to any person to pardon those that were found guilty of such crimes, it is evident that, no one but God himself, could mitigate the punishment prescribed by the law. And this naturally leads me to consider what he immediately after observes, “When David was guilty of ADUL-
“TERY and MURDER, did God contradict himself
“and act in defiance of the law of Moses, when
“he pardoned him?” To this seemingly solemn question, I answer no. God neither did, nor ever will contradict himself. This will appear clear, on a due investigation of the two cases in question; and which will be found to be very different from each other. For in the first place, David was not taken in the fact, but had done it in secret, as the prophet observed, “For thou didst it secretly,” consequently, there were no witnesses of the fact to have accused him before the temporal judge. Second, David confessed his sin, and became penitent, verse 13*. “And David said unto Nathan, “I have sinned against the LORD.” And in consequence thereof, the prophet was instructed to

* See also the 51st Psalm, which he composed on the occasion.

answer, "The LORD also hath put away thy sin, "thou shalt not die." But, notwithstanding that his life was thus spared, (and which, as king of Israel destined to deliver them from their enemies, and to build up their future hope, might have been granted to him for their sakes) yet, was he punished in a most exemplary manner, agreeable to his station, and the manner of his committing the crime; and which convinced him and every one that shall read his story, that although they may be able to conceal their sin from men, yet, can they not hide it from God, to whose all-seeing eye, every thing is laid open. And this is the reason, as the learned Abarbanal observes, that his crime was ordered to be recorded by the prophet; for at the time it was committed, no one knew any thing of it. And also that he might stand as an eminent example of the efficacy of sincere repentance in sinners, as he himself emphatically expresses it in Psalm li. 15. "*Then* "will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners "shall be converted unto thee." Hence it is manifest, that the case of the woman, and that of David, are widely different, and do not bear the least resemblance to each other. For David was not accused before an earthly tribunal; as his crime was only known to God, and who also knowing the sincerity of his repentance, in consequence thereof remitted the punishment of death, but did not however, let him go unpunished. Whereas the very reverse of this, was the

the woman's case; for she was taken in the fact, and accused publicly, and therefore ought to have been tried before a temporal judge, where, if she had been found guilty, no human power could have pardoned her, as the law commands the guilty to be put to death without reserve, because no one but God is capable of judging of true penitence. But, of the woman's repentance, we read nothing; for which reason, I think Mr. Swain has acted very proper, in cautiously observing, (page 45,) "And for ought we know, "penitent criminal." Ay, for *ought* we know indeed; for we really know nothing about her penitence, as not the least mention is made thereof. From all which it is clear, that the two cases are not equal; for David was tried by God himself, and who being capable of judging of the sincerity of repentance, was pleased to remit a part, and punish him in part: and, in doing this, as the Judge of all the earth, we must suppose, he acted according to the eternal rules of justice; consequently, he neither contradicted himself, nor the law of Moses: but we do not find that the woman received the least punishment for her crime; so that her punishment was not mitigated, but wholly omitted; and which, none but God had power to do. And, as I do not allow Jesus to be God; as a prophet, I freely assert, HE HAD NOT THE POWER OF REMISSION OF SINS; NO prophet having ever arrogated to himself any such power. Nay, not even Moses himself: for

when the man who gathered sticks in the wilderness on the Sabbath*, was brought to him, by those that found him, he was so far from dismissing him, or remitting his punishment, (although in the eyes of many, his crime may appear not near so heinous, as that of adultery,) that he had him put in ward, till such time, as God was pleased to declare unto him what punishment was to be inflicted on the delinquent. This, is a demonstration of the truth of what I have observed, viz. that Jesus considered as a prophet, acting conformable to the law of Moses, had no right or authority to act in this case as he did: but that his acting in that manner, was contrary to the law of Moses; of which the candid reader is by this time I hope, fully convinced.

It is not necessary for me to reply to any of the other objections which you or the rest of my antagonists have advanced concerning the contradictions of Jesus to the law of Moses, because they are fully answered in the preceding: for as I have clearly shewn, that as a prophet he had neither power or authority to make the least alteration in the law of Moses; and, as both you and they allow that Jesus did make an alteration; and, as I have shewn that the Gospels teach, and Christians hold the abrogation of the law of Moses, it is manifest that we could not by any means receive him as a prophet sent from God, because he contradicted Moses.

* Numb. xv. 32, 33, &c.

In order to invalidate what I have advanced concerning the contradictions contained in the Gospel history, you observe, (page 12, Letters Part II.) "One of the contradictions that Mr. Levi observes in the Gospel history, (page 81,) is, that according to Matthew, Jesus was descended from Nathan: but according to Luke from Solomon. As I reject the introduction to the gospel of Matthew, as not written by him, I am not concerned with this contradiction." To this reasoning of your's, I cannot help observing that, it is really very diverting to see how handsomely you endeavour so frequently to introduce the spuriousness of part of Matthew's gospel: and after all, no one I think can well blame you for it; as it seems to be your chief support, and often helps you out at a dead lift, when every other resource fails you, as in the present instance. Yet, this is not sufficient sometimes to extricate you from your difficulties, but in order to get rid of the miraculous conception, you are obliged to deprive the Evangelists of the gift of inspiration, and reduce them to the level of mere historians. But, as this appears to me to be a dangerous experiment, I would advise you to be cautious in the use of it, as it may lead you into such difficulties, as you would fain have wished to have avoided. Something of this kind you seem to have fallen into already, and which I cannot forbear taking notice of, because, in my humble opinion, it tends much to the illustration of the subject in debate.

In

In order to get rid of the miraculous conception, (which hangs about your neck like a millstone) you observe, (page 8, Letters Part II.) “ I shall only observe on this occasion, that I consider the evangelists as mere *historians*, (indeed they do not pretend to any thing more) faithful relators of what they believed to be true. But no histories are received on the mere faith of the writers, but properly on the testimony of the age in which they wrote.” And, page 10, you observe, “ The miraculous conception, therefore, cannot be said to have the testimony of the age in which it was promulgated; and as the Jews being natives of the country, had the best opportunity of informing themselves concerning it, their testimony which is against it, is intitled to the greatest credit.” Thus Sir, you reason to ease yourself from the burden of the miraculous conception. Will you now give me leave to make use of your principles, and conclusions, on a more enlarged scale? It is admitted that Jesus was born at Bethlehem of Jewish parentage: he employed the whole course of his ministry in Judea, Galilee, &c. for the conversion of the Jewish nation, declaring himself to be the Son of God—or the Messiah—or a prophet, if you please; assuring them that he had a divine mission to establish a new law or doctrine; and as a proof thereof, had power to work miracles. Yet, notwithstanding all his labour, and repeated declarations of his mission and power, he made but few converts, and those chiefly

chiefly from among the lower class of the nation. The great body of people disbelieved his new doctrine, justly considering it as repugnant to the laws which God had established for Israel, by the hands of his servant Moses. They gave no credit to what you call (page 9,) the great and leading facts in the Gospel history of "the account of the doctrines, the miracles, and resurrection of Christ."

They therefore, cannot be said to have the testimony of the age in which they were promulgated: and as the Jews, being natives of the country, had the best opportunity of informing themselves concerning them, their testimony which is against them, IS INTITLED TO THE GREATEST CREDIT.*

I shall now take notice of what my other opponents have observed, concerning the contradictions of Matthew and Luke about the genealogy of

* The learned Author of Ben Mordecai's Letters, seems also to think, that the suffering of Christ, &c. had not the unanimous testimony of the age in which it was promulgated, for he says page 10, "The Basilidians in the very beginning of Christianity, denied that Christ himself suffered; but said *Simon the Cyrenian* suffered in his place: (Irenae. L. i. chap. 23. Epiph. Haer. 24. num. 3.) and the *Cerentians* before them, and the *Carpocratians* next, (to name no more of those who affirmed Jesus to have been a mere man;) did believe the same thing. Photius quotes, from a book called the *Journeys of the Apostles*; that he was not crucified, but another in his stead. Some thought it was a spy, who came to trap him; others, that it was *Titian*, who was directed by Judas to kill him; and in the forged Epistle of *Barnabas*, it is said to have been *Judas* himself, who appeared like him."

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Jesus.

Jesus. Dr. Krauter, after citing my objection, observes (page 57,) "As for the genealogies of St. Matthew and Luke, it is manifest from inspection, that they almost entirely differ from David to Joseph; but it must be a *precipitate reader* who therefore would think that they could not belong to one and the same person; whereas every man must have two genealogies belonging to him, one from the father's, and the other from the mother's side, which necessarily must more or less differ, if these have not been brother and sister. Now, that Matthew gives us the genealogy of Joseph, as the reputed father of Jesus, is evident from his own words. For after he had throughout the whole of this genealogy used the expression—such an one begat such an one, and accordingly said (verse 16,) Jacob begat *Joseph*, the husband of Mary, here he does not go on—*Joseph begat Jesus*, but suddenly changes the expression, saying, Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom (Mary) was born; or (as it might for the better conformity have been rendered) was begotten Jesus, who is called Christ. On the other hand, that Luke gives us the genealogy of Jesus from his mother Mary's side, is likewise evident from his own words at the beginning of his genealogy, which are very remarkable if rightly understood. After he had related (chap. iii. 22.) that at the baptism of Jesus, a voice from Heaven came, which said, Thou art my beloved Son, in thee, I

" am well pleased, he immediately goes on, ac-
 " cording to the Greek text.—The exact transla-
 " tion of which seems to be this: and this or
 " the very same, (viz. the Son of God) was that
 " Jesus who was about thirty years beginning,
 " being (when he was reputed the son of Joseph)
 " that of Eli—of God. Luke would have con-
 " tradicted himself, if, at the same time he avers
 " that Jesus was only *reputed* to be the son of
 " Joseph, he had said, that he was the son of
 " Joseph. But it was very necessary to observe,
 " as he was about to assert him to be the son of
 " God, when he was reputed to be the son of
 " Joseph, that he was properly no one man's son,
 " only by his mother's side the son of Eli her
 " father, consequently, grandson, and so on in a
 " series to Adam, but the son of God originally."

I have given this quotation intire, without any
 interruption, by commenting on the different
 paragraphs as I went along; because, I was wil-
 ling, that the reader should have the whole of
 this curious reasoning before him at one view.
 Whether I shall be able to do justice to the text
 by my comment, must be left to the judgment
 of the candid reader; and so without any farther
 preamble shall enter thereon. The doctor freely
 acknowledges, that the genealogies of Matthew
 and Luke, differ almost intirely from David to
 Joseph, but observes, that it must be a *precipitate*
reader that would think they could not therefore
 belong to one and the same person, because (as

he observes) every man has two genealogies, one from the father's and the other from the mother's side; so that Matthew gives us his father's genealogy, and Luke his mother's. But how does he prove this? by explaining the words of Luke "being (when he was reputed the son of Joseph) that of Eli—of God." By which it appears, that Eli denotes God; so that God was the father of Mary, grandfather of Jesus, and the son of Matthat; for Luke says, (according to the present translation now before me) "being (as was supposed) the son of Eli, which was the son of Matthat," &c. From whence it is manifest, that, if Eli is not the proper name of a man, but denotes God, then, according to the doctor's explanation, Jesus was both the son and grandson* of God: but

* The doctor in a note observes, "The Hebrews have no particular names to distinguish the relation to distant progenitors, as grandson, but simply *son*, and thus Christ is called the son of all from Eli to Adam." By this it seems that the doctor was conscious of the absurdity of his expression, "the son of Eli her father, consequently grandson." And therefore would willingly give it this turn. But what will he say, or the reader think, when I inform him, that, the Hebrews have a proper name for grandson, viz. נֶכֶד, as Isaiah says, chap. xiv. 22. וְנִין וְנָכָד, and son, and grandson. See also Job, xviii. 19. What led the doctor into this error, was, I suppose, his ignorance of the sacred language; for the present translations, read "son and nephew:" but that is contrary to the sense of the Hebrew, and the meaning of the prophet; and as a proof thereof, I must take notice of Gen. xxi. 23. where the same word occurs, only with the affix,

but according to Luke it appears, that Joseph was the son of Eli, who was the son of Matthat, for not a word of Mary is there mentioned. This is a demonstration of the truth of what I have advanced, viz. that Luke also gives the genealogy of Joseph. And this seems to be the opinion of a certain writer in the *Theolog. Reposit. on the miraculous conception, and who also seems not to admit of the present translation; for in speaking thereof, he observes†, “Where our version renders, “ *Being, as was supposed, the son of Joseph*. But I deny this to “ be the proper translation of the words: and “ maintain that we should render, *Being (AS THE “ CUSTOM WAS) a son of Joseph (i. e.) ut apud “ illos mos erat*; as the custom was among the “ Jews of reckoning their genealogies.” He then observes, page 158, “What was then the “ practice of the Jews in these cases? Undoubt- “ edly to deduce the *pedigree* by the *father’s* side. “ So then we are presented with *two* genea- “ logies of Joseph’s progenitors, materially dif-

ferent, as, וְלִנְיָ וְלִנְכָדִי. And which in the English translation reads, *nor with my son, nor with my son’s son*; i. e. *grandson*, for that is the proper meaning of נֶכֶד. See *Lingua Sacra. Radix. נֶכֶד*. Kimchi on the Roots, Buxtorfi *Concordantiæ Biblorum*, Jarchi, Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Abarbanal, on Isaiah, &c. Hence it is manifest, that the Doctor’s assertion is false, and the conclusion he has drawn from thence a mere fallacy.

• *Nepiodidascales*.

† Theol. Rep. Vol. V. page 157.

ferent from each other." From all which it is clear, that both Matthew and Luke give us the genealogy of Joseph; for not a word is mentioned in either of them concerning Mary as the lineal descendant of David; as no such thing was ever known amongst the Jews.

The Doctor observes, page 63, "What Mr. "Levi finds fault for with *Luke*, that he made "Jesus to descend from Nathan, the Son of "David instead of Solomon, arises from a pre- "judice, which however, is almost general, as if "the Messiah were to be lineally descended from "Solomon." This, is misconstruing my words: for I neither found fault with Luke for making Jesus descend from Nathan, nor approved of Matthew for making him descend from Solomon: as I never asserted that the Messiah was to descend from Solomon; because, that was foreign to the purpose, and no part of the argument. I only asserted, that, Matthew in the first chapter of his Gospel gives us the genealogy of Christ, and Luke, in the third of his Gospel does the same; but with such difference, that an unprejudiced person, would hardly think they belonged to one and the same person: for the latter not only differs from the former, in almost the whole genealogy from Joseph to David, (and which the doctor acknowledges) but has also added a few more generations; and likewise made Jesus to descend from *Nathan*, the son of David, instead of *Solomon*.

This

This is what I asserted, (page 85—89,) and in which there is not a word, that can fairly be construed as asserting that the Messiah was to be lineally descended from *Solomon* in preference to *Nathan*; as I only took notice of the contradictions between the two Evangelists; and that one made Jesus descend from Solomon, and the other made him descend from Nathan. And, as I have shewn that the genealogies do both properly belong to Joseph, I think it is clear from thence, that the Doctor has not advanced any thing that in the least weakens my position.

As to Mr. SWAIN, he only observes, (page 74.) that, “ Bishop KIDDER, in his demonstration of “ the Messiah, has employed ten chapters to consider the objections of the Jews against the account which the Evangelists give of the genealogy of Jesus. Here Mr. Levi will find his objections fairly stated, and, I think, satisfactorily answered.” But is it not very surprising, that out of all those TEN CHAPTERS written by the Bishop, Mr. Swain, has not produced *one* clear and satisfactory proof to invalidate my objection? As he has not, I have a right to take it for granted that he CANNOT; consequently, my objection remains in its full force.

Neither has *Anti-Socinus*, alias *Anselm Bayly* weakened it; for he only* observes, “ As to the “ hole, which you would pick in the coat of Matthew and Luke, respecting the genealogy of

* Second Remarks, page 30.

“ Christ,

“Christ, it is but small, and of no importance, whether any one can mend it or not.” This is so far from weakening the force of my objection, that on the contrary it shews it to be unanswerable. For if so learned and zealous a Christian Priest, cannot advance any thing satisfactory to confute it, but in order to evade the force of it, treats it as, “but small, and of no importance,” while a Bishop thought it of such importance, as to employ TEN CHAPTERS upon it; and another learned divine, Dr. Berryman, has also in his sermons treated it with much care and accuracy, besides a number of others that have written on the subject, I think, it is an irrefragable proof that he is unable to confute it.

I am, &c.

LETTER

LETTER III.

Of the Sufferings of the Jewish Nation, and the explanation of the Seventy Weeks, &c.

DEAR SIR,

YOU observe, (page 32, Letters, Part. II.)
 “ As an argument of your nation having
 “ offended God beyond any thing that is recorded
 “ in the Books of the Old Testament, I requested
 “ you to attend to the extreme severity of your
 “ present sufferings, and the long continuance of
 “ your banishment from your own country; and
 “ I said, that a captivity of seventy years was
 “ deemed sufficient punishment for all your trans-
 “ gressions preceding that event.” You farther
 observe, “ Mr. Levi replies, that the Babylonish
 “ captivity was not a punishment for *all* the sins
 “ of the preceding period.” You then proceed
 to quote what I have said, page 45, and 49.
 After which you observe, “ Thus does Mr. Levi
 “ interpret Daniel’s famous prophecy of *seventy*
 “ *weeks*, of which he gives the following account,
 “ page 40.”—After having given this quotation *
 also, you proceed page 34. “ But the language
 “ of the prophecy clearly indicates that the termi-
 “ nation of this longer period of seven times
 “ seventy years, would be some joyful event, and

* I forbear citing all the quotations, to avoid swelling this publication to an enormous bulk.

“ not

“not a calamitous one. For it was to finish
 “transgression, to make an end of sin, to make
 “reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in ever-
 “lasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision,
 “(which Mr. Levi renders, page 55, by *publicly*
 “*authenticating it*) and to anoint the most holy.”
 Could this be *the beginning of sorrows*? This
 objection of your’s is so far from weakening my
 position, that on the contrary it adds force to
 the explanation which I have given of the pro-
 phesy. For I observed page 44—48. But,
 verily, as to Israel, he would not only wait *seventy*
years, but *seven times seventy years*, after which,
 their kingdom should be cut off and their domi-
 nion cease, and they return into captivity. That
 is, God would allow them so long time to repent
 of their sins; and that they might the better be
 enabled so to do, God stirred up *Cyrus* to give
 them leave to build a temple, that they might
 thereby be able to offer sacrifices, &c. But, if
 during that time they should not repent, (as was
 actually the case) they were then to go into cap-
 tivity, that by their sufferings therein, they will
 be able to finish (or more properly to consume)*
 transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to
 make expiation for iniquity. And therefore, this
 is so far from being “some joyful event,” that on
 the contrary it is a prediction of farther calamities,
 as may be perceived from the whole prophecy,

• See *Lingua Sacra*, Radix בלה.

but especially the close of it; and as you yourself acknowledge, page 35, in contradiction to what you asserted in the preceding page. For you there say, "One week still remains to make up the seventy; but of this the angel gives an account at the close of the prophecy. It was that week in the midst of which the sacrifice and oblation was to cease, which was to be the beginning of farther calamities." From whence it is manifest, that the end of the seventy weeks was to be the beginning of farther calamities. And what greater calamity could befall them, than the destruction of the city and the sanctuary, by the people of the prince that should come, &c. And they consequently go into captivity. Hence it is clear, that no joyful event is mentioned to take place at the end of the seventy weeks, but a beginning of farther calamities, i. e. their going into captivity. And the calamities which they would suffer during so long and dreadful a captivity as this has been, would be the means of consuming transgression, &c. Agreeable to what the prophet says, "And I will scatter thee among the nations, and disperse thee in the countries, and I will consume thy filthiness out of thee.*" This certainly means the present captivity, for in the Babylonish captivity, they were not scattered among the nations, nor dispersed in the countries, and consequently, their filthiness was not consumed: but in

* Ezek. xxii. 15.

the present captivity, they were to remain till transgression was consumed, &c. and which being perfected, would be the means TO BRING IN EVERLASTING RIGHTEOUSNESS: i. e. that *all* the earth might come to the knowledge of the true* God, and sin be destroyed out of the earth, as Moses says, “And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed
 “to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart,
 “and with all thy soul†.” And to the same purpose does the prophet Ezekiel express himself, “For I will take you from among the nations, and gather you out of all countries, and
 “will bring you into your own land, &c. Then
 “will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye
 “shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and
 “from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new
 “heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will
 “I put within you, and I will take away the
 “stony heart out of your flesh, and will give
 “you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit
 “within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do
 “them.” (Ezek. xxxvi. 24, 25, 26, &c. also chap. xi. 18, 19. Jer. xxxii. 39.) Thus, Sir, it is plain that by their captivity, they were to be cleansed from their filthiness, and that being perfected, their heart was to be circumcised, the heart

* See my answer to Dr. Priestley, 1st Letters, page 56, 57, 60, 61.

† Deut. xxx. 6.

of stone taken away, a new heart given them, &c. By this symbolic and figurative language, is pointed out the EVERLASTING RIGHTEOUSNESS spoken of by Daniel: the heart of stone signifying sin. And therefore, when they are cleansed from their filthiness, i. e. sins, and a new heart and spirit given them, they will sin no more; consequently, everlasting righteousness will be brought in. But, nothing of this was perfected at the end of the seventy weeks: for so far were they from being cleansed from their filthiness, that the angel says, "And for the overspreading of abomination, (i. e. the abominations which they had committed during both the first and second temples) he shall make (it) desolate, even until the consummation," &c. So that it is clear, that they were then in their filthiness and abomination; and for which, they were to be punished in a most exemplary manner, by having their city and sanctuary entirely destroyed; their government cut off, &c. From whence it is also manifest, that everlasting righteousness could not have been brought in; because, they still continued in sin, and had yet the heart of stone. And to which, I suppose Jesus alluded, when he gave his reason for speaking to them in parables, by saying, "For this peoples heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest at any time they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be con-

“verted, and I heal them*.” Matth. xiii. 15. All which, is a demonstration that no joyful event was to take place at the termination of the seventy weeks, but that it was to be the beginning of farther calamities, and which was to make an atonement for their manifold sins. And when they shall have made such atonement, either by their sufferings, or a sincere repentance, their restoration to their own country, according to Moses and the other prophets, will immediately take place, and which you likewise acknowledge, page 41, 42.

You observe, (page 34,) “If by the *most holy*, “we understand the holy prophet, or prince, “whom we suppose to be mentioned afterwards, “under the character of *Messiah the prince*, these “four hundred and ninety years will terminate “at the time of his being appointed to his office.” On this assertion, I must take the liberty to make a few observations. In the first place, you say, that “if by the most holy, we are to understand “the holy prophet or prince.” But, this I must inform you is wresting the sense of Scripture, and doing great violence to it; for in no part thereof, is, קדוש קדשים *The holy of holies*: or even according to the English translation, the most holy, ever applied to any prophet, or prince. But, every

* How far the words quoted from Isaiah, were applicable to the purpose for which they were used by Jesus, is not my present business to enquire; the real meaning of the prophet's words, I have given in *Lingua Sacra*. Radix שָׁמֶן.

person the least conversant in Scripture, knows, that it denotes the most holy place, or the altar, &c. as I observed in my answer to your first Letters, page 59, 63. And therefore, I am much surpris'd, that a person of your knowledge in Scripture, should attempt to construe it in this manner; as I am sensible, that you cannot produce one clear simple and unequivocal proof of its being applied to any prophet, or prince; but numbers can be adduced to shew its being used in the sense that I have explained it*. Second, you observe, that the holy prophet or prince, to whom you understand the term *most holy* to be applied, is the same who you suppose "to be" mentioned afterwards under the character of "*Messiah the prince*, these four hundred and "ninety years will terminate at the time of his "being appointed to his office. This," you observe, "I think, we are authoris'd to infer from "the manner in which the angel immediately "proceeds to explain himself. *Know therefore,* "and understand, that from the going forth of the "commandment to restore and build Jerusalem unto "*Messiah the prince* † shall be seven weeks and sixty- "two weeks, that is (as you say) sixty-nine weeks,"

Thus have you explained the passage, in order to favour your hypothesis; but which I must tell

* Exod. xxvi. 33, 34. xxix. 37. and xl. 10. Numb. iv. 19. 1 King. vi. 16, vi. 3—8. 2 Chron. iii. 8, 10, &c. &c.

† More properly *the anointed prince*. See my first Letters, page 58, 62.

you plainly, is a mere fallacy; contrary to the sense of Scripture, and almost all the commentators thereon, both Jews and Christians. For they all unanimously agree that, the 25th verse which you quote, contains two periods: viz. *seven weeks*, which I understand to be from the time of the going forth of the commandment, unto the anointed prince. And threescore and two weeks; during which time Jerusalem was to be built, restored, and continue*, was another period; and the one week mentioned in the 27th verse, was likewise another period; which last period you also allow, page 35. Hence it is manifest, that those two periods are not to be confounded together, but must be considered as two distinct periods, as I have shewn in my first Letters. But above all, how can you reconcile this position, with what you assert in the preceding page? For there you do not say that *Messiah the prince* was to come at the end of the sixty-nine weeks, but that, “these four hundred and ninety years will terminate at the time of his being appointed to his office.” What office? that of his ministry, you must certainly mean: so then according to the latter assertion, he did not enter on his ministry at the end of the sixty-nine weeks; i. e. four hundred and eighty-three years, as you make the angel explain himself; but at the termination of the four hundred and ninety; so that if Christ is *Mes-*

* First Letters to Dr. Priestley, page 59, 63.

fiab the prince mentioned by the angel, he must have entered upon his ministry after he was cut off: for the angel says, "And after threescore and two weeks, shall the Messiah" (or more properly, *the anointed*, as I have explained it)* "be cut of." Hence it is manifest, that the anointed was to be cut off after the sixty-nine weeks, and consequently, could not be appointed to his office at the termination of the seventy. How you will be able to reconcile these contradictory assertions, is best known to yourself; to me they appear almost insurmountable: but that may be owing to my ignorance of *profane literature*, and which may perhaps contain the secret mystery of reconciling contradictions: so that to a person of your profound knowledge therein, there is no doubt of his being capable of rendering the most glaring contradictions reconcileable, and with one stroke of his magical wand make them coalesce. If so, I should be obliged to you, if you would be pleased to take the following (which is partly contained in the foregoing) into consideration. In page 34, you observe, that by the *most holy* may be understood the holy prophet or prince, whom you suppose to be *Messiah the prince* mentioned afterwards. By which it is evident, that you allow the Messiah mentioned in the 25th verse: and, who you contend (page 44,) was the same mentioned in the 26th verse, to be a prince, conse-

* Ibid. 60, 64.

quently,

quently it follows that, the Messiah that suffered was a prince: and of course, a prince of the house of David. But, this you seem flatly to contradict, by making the Messiah who was to be cut off; and the prince, two distinct persons: for in page 51, you observe, "Do not reject without examination the hypothesis I mentioned in my former Letters, and which I have maintained at large in the *Theological Repository*, of the distinction between the *Messiah* who was to suffer, and who alone bears that name, and the *prince of the house of David*, under whom you are to enjoy your future glory." In the *Theological Repository*, Vol. V. page 212, you observe, "All Christian commentators and critics have found great difficulties in this subject. But it appears to me, that they have arisen chiefly from the necessity they imagined themselves to be under of applying more prophecies to Jesus Christ, than in my opinion, belong to him, and especially from not distinguishing the characters of the *humble prophet*, from those of the *temporal prince*, but applying in a spiritual sense to the former, what was intended in a literal sense to the latter*: in which they have followed too closely the writers of the New Testament. A little reflection, however, would have prevented the embarrassment of Christians on this subject,

* I forbear making any remarks on this hypothesis, as it will be amply treated of, in my *Dissertation on the Prophecies*, where it will naturally fall under discussion.

"especially

“ especially an attention on the one hand, to the
 “ clear language of prophecies, which speak of
 “ nothing but *temporal prosperity*, and on the
 “ express declaration of our Saviour that *his*
 “ *kingdom was not of this world**: the clear inference from which is, that the *Messiah*, and the
 “ *temporal Prince*, are two persons.”

Hence it is manifest from your own mode of reasoning, (to say nothing of the contradiction it contains) that, *Messiah the Prince* mentioned in verse 25, cannot be the *Messiah*, or *anointed*, that was to be cut off, verse 26, and whom you call the *humble prophet*. Because, in the former verse, the angel is explicit in mentioning *עַד מְשִׁיחַ נָגִיד* unto the *anointed prince*. This according to your hypothesis, cannot be applied to the *humble prophet*: for *נָגִיד* in the Hebrew, denotes a prince, or ruler, &c. one invested with temporal authority, or supreme command; a sovereign, &c. See 2 Sam. vii. 8. 1 Kings i. 35. xiv. 7. and xvi. 2. Besides a number of other parts of Scripture. Now, as it is allowed on all hands, that Jesus had no such temporal power, as a prince, or ruler, it consequently follows that, the title of *מְשִׁיחַ נָגִיד*, *Anointed prince*, cannot with propriety be applied to him; of course, according to your hypothesis, the *מְשִׁיחַ נָגִיד* mentioned in verse 25, cannot be the same with the

* This is a demonstration, that Jesus could not be the Messiah foretold by the prophets, as in their prophecies they only speak of a temporal prince, as I shall clearly shew in my *Dissertation on the Prophecies*.

person mentioned simply by the name of משיח;
 of necessity, they must be two persons; which is
 all that I contended for. This is a demonstra-
 tion of the futility of your objection, page 44, and
 the truth of my position; for you there observe,
 “ He (Mr. Levi) will not allow that the Messiah,
 “ which is twice mentioned in this prophecy, re-
 “ fers at all to the person whom you *now* distin-
 “ guish by that title; but says that, in the former
 “ part of the prophecy, it is to be understood of
 “ Cyrus, and in the latter of Agrippa the younger:
 “ though, surely, nothing can be more unnatural
 “ than to explain it in this manner. Can the same
 “ term, in two contiguous sentences of the same
 “ prophecy, signify two different persons, one of
 “ them a heathen prince, and the other a king of
 “ Judea, who lived seven hundred years after
 “ him?” But, as I have shewn that, according
 to your reasoning, and the language of Scripture,
 (because the term is not the same in the two con-
 tiguous sentences,) they must be two persons, it is
 plain that your objection is a mere nullity. It
 also fully demonstrates the difficulties that you la-
 bour under in endeavouring to establish that ab-
 surd hypothesis so contrary to the language of
 Scripture, viz. that the persons mentioned in the
 25th and 26th verses, are one and the same person;
 and which naturally leads you into the contradic-
 tions I have just mentioned; for as you are fully
 sensible that, the prophecies speak only of a *tem-
 poral prince*, you are consequently under a necessity,
 according

according to your explanation of the prophecy, to call the Messiah that was to be cut off, by the name of the *bumble prophet*; from which it is clear, that he cannot be the *prince* mentioned in the 25th verse. Hence, my position, viz. that the prophecy speaks of two distinct persons, is fully established. And, I must farther observe, that it is so far from being unnatural to explain the prophecy to denote two different persons, that it is clear, that three persons are actually mentioned in the prophecy; the first and last of whom, are called נָגִיד, *Prince*, and who were both heathens; the former *Cyrus*, and the latter *Titus*, who was the prince of the people that was to come to destroy the city and the sanctuary. But, the anointed who was to be cut off, is called simply מָשִׁיחַ, *anointed*, i. e. the king, or high priest*; by which was meant, that they should have no more kingly or priestly power, or government; and which was very aptly signified by the term מָשִׁיחַ, *anointed*: because, that is an indefinite term; and properly denotes all the class of those that were anointed, whether kings, or priests: for after the people that came with the prince, destroyed the city and the sanctuary, the kingly power, and ministry of the priesthood was intirely cut off; and there was no more of it, nor hath been unto this day. But, if the word anointed, or Messiah, had been intended to

* For the high priest, is also called מָשִׁיחַ, as, אִם דִּבְרֵהוּ
הַמָּשִׁיחַ יִחַט, If the anointed priest doth sin. Levit. iv. 3.

denote the anointed prince mentioned in verse 25, the angel would have made use of the term מָשִׁיחַ, with the ה demonstrative, or notificative*, always used in the Hebrew, when speaking of persons, or things, already mentioned, or known: from whence it is clear, that the term מָשִׁיחַ does not denote the anointed prince mentioned in verse 25.

And, here I cannot avoid taking notice of another difficulty which Christians in general labour under, in applying this prophecy to Christ as the Messiah; the greatness of which, Dr. Prideaux was so sensible of, that he took great pains to remove it, but as it appears with little success. I mean, the cutting off of the *Messiah*, or anointed, *after* the sixty-two weeks, according to the words of the prophecy, "And after threescore and "two weeks, shall *Messiah* (or anointed) be cut "off;" that is, at the end of the sixty-nine weeks. Now, if what you and Christians in general say, be true, viz. that unto *Messiah the prince* shall be seven weeks, and sixty-two weeks, then his coming, and his cutting off, must have happened at the same time both together, consequently, no intermediate space would have been left for his ministry: and which is a demonstration, that no such person as Jesus, as a suffering Messiah, was ever intended by the prophecy.

* *Lingua Sacra*, Part I. chap. ix. sect. 2. page 132.

As to what you say, page 46, "Agrippa was too inconsiderable a prince, to be the subject of such a prophecy," I think, has been fully answered in the foregoing; as I have shewn, that it does not particularly point out Agrippa only, but properly, the whole class or race of those that were anointed, whether kings, or priests, and by which their state and form of government was to be intirely changed and destroyed. And surely, such an event, cannot be thought too inconsiderable for such a prophecy.

You also observe in the same page, "No Jew, no person of any nation, ever occasioned such a revolution in the religious state of the world, as Jesus Christ effected." But have you, who are so well versed in history, forgot Mahomet, who laid the foundation of an extensive empire*, and introduced the religion that bears his name, and which in a short time, overspread the whole east: so that the Mahomedans have been reckoned more numerous than the Christians. His progress was great indeed; for he rose in the space of twenty-three years, from very small beginnings, to such a height, as to make one of the GREATEST REVOLUTIONS THAT EVER HAPPENED IN THE WORLD; as confest by Christians themselves. See

* And what is still more extraordinary, this empire was founded, as I may say, on the very ruins of Christianity; as the successes of his followers against the Christians evidently evince. See Ockley's History of the Saracens.

Toulmin's

Toulmin's Dissertations, page 160*. And who also observes, *ibid.* page 152, "Mahomet entered a bold and intrepid protest against the polytheism and idolatry of his countrymen: in this respect, his character had great merit; and he was an instrument of divine providence to preserve the doctrine of the divine unity, when for ages it was obscured and enervated amongst Christians, by the notion of a plurality of persons." Thus, Mahomet may be said to have brought back an immense number of the inhabitants of Arabia, &c. from idolatry to the knowledge of the true God, and preserved the remembrance of one God; and that so effectually, that the grand fundamental creed laid down by him, that there is but one God, has continued in its utmost purity for so many hundred years; and which is by far more than you allow to Christianity. For according to your opinion, all Trinitarians (and which are the bulk or great body of Christians) are idolaters. Hence it is clearly, and I presume satisfactorily proved, (even from the authority of Christian writers) that Mahomed effected the greatest revolution; consequently, your assertion is shewn to be ill founded. I forbear making any farther remarks on the futility of it, but submit the whole to the judgment of the impartial and candid reader.

* See also Prideaux's life of Mahomet. Addison's first state of Mahomedism.

You say, page 44, " Mr. Levi supposes, with
 " R. Isaac and S. Jarchi, though he does not dis-
 " tinctly express it, that the *going forth of the com-*
 " *mandment*, means the declaration of the divine
 " will to Jeremiah; but nothing is advanced by
 " these writers to make it probable that the *going*
 " *forth of the commandment, to restore and to build*
 " *Jerusalem*, is coincident with the time of the
 " demolition of it by Nebuchadnezzar." To
 this, I answer, that, as I have already shewn that
 the *anointed prince* mentioned in verse 25, was a
 different person from the one mentioned in verse
 26, as being a *prince*, having temporal power.
 And also, that the Messiah or anointed that was
 to be cut off after the sixty-two weeks, could not
 with propriety be said to come after the sixty-two
 weeks; for then his coming and cutting off
 would have happened both together, it is manifest
 that, the explanation which I have given in my
 first Letters, (page 58—62.) that from the
 going forth of the *commandment* (or more properly
the word, as I shall shew presently) to restore and
 build Jerusalem unto CYRUS the *anointed prince*,
 should be seven weeks, or forty-nine years. For
 to whom could the term *anointed prince* be with
 the greater propriety applied than to CYRUS,
 who is so called expressly by name, by the prophet,
 " Thus saith the LORD to his *anointed*, to
 " CYRUS." Isaiah xlv. 1. And who actually
 gave leave to build and restore Jerusalem. And
 thus was the first part of the prophecy fulfilled:
 for

for from the time of the destruction of the first temple till Cyrus, was seven weeks, or forty-nine years, as I have already observed. As to דָּבָר it properly denotes *word* in its primary sense, being derived from the verb דָּבַר to speak*. And therefore, מִן-מֵצֵא דָּבָר, denotes from the going forth of *the word*: that is, the word of the Lord by the prophet. Jer. xxv. 12. And not a *commandment*, by which Christians have confounded the prophecy, and bewildered themselves, as I shall shew hereafter. That this is the true sense of the term, may be clearly proved by analogy with the words of the prophet used in the second verse of the same chapter. “I Daniel understood by books the “number of years, whereof דָּבָר THE WORD of the “LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet,” &c. But what I take to be decisive, is the following, as recorded 2 Chron. xxxvi. 24. “Now in the first “year of Cyrus king of Persia, that THE WORD of “the LORD (spoken) by the mouth of Jeremiah “might be accomplished†, the LORD stirred up the

* See *Lingua Sacra*. Radix דָּבַר.

† Hence you may clearly perceive what is meant by the going forth of the word: i. e. the time of its beginning to act; for then the accomplishment of the declaration of the divine will to Jeremiah, began to have its completion: so that it is clear, that it does not signify the time of the delivery of the prophecy: but the time of its going forth, that is, of its taking place, for then it began to come forth, and have effect. And which (as I have already observed) was from the destruction of the first temple, from whence the seventy years

“the spirit of Cyrus King of Persia, that he made
 “proclamation throughout all his kingdom,”
 &c. And the very same words, does the book
 of Ezra contain, as the foundation of the build-
 ing and restoration of Jerusalem. Ezra i. 1.
 All which is a demonstration, that the building
 and restoration of Jerusalem, was founded on
 the word of the Lord by the prophet Jeremiah,
 and from whence, it is clear that, that was also
 the meaning of the angel in this place, as
 already shewn.

of the captivity commenced. And therefore, those writers
 had no occasion to advance any thing to prove the going forth
 of the word to be coincident with the demolition of Jerusalem,
 because they never meant any such thing by it; but that the
 going forth of the word meant the time of the captivity of
 Zedekiah. This I speak of |R. Isaac. But, as to Jarchi, I
 must tell you plainly, that he does not apply דבר to denote
 the word of the Lord by Jeremiah, for he says, מן מוצא דבר
 מתו"ל מוצא דבר זה שיצא בתחילת תדונוניך, תדע ותשכיל, וגו'
 From whence it is clear, that Jarchi understands דבר men-
 tioned in the 25th verse, to be the same with that mentioned
 in the 23d. So that the real meaning of Jarchi is, that the
 going forth of the word, denotes that mentioned in verse 23.
 At the beginning of thy supplication the *word came forth*, &c.
 thou shalt know and understand that from the destruction of the
 temple, &c. But not a word does he say about its denoting
 the declaration of the divine will by Jeremiah; but only the
 going forth of the word to the angel to come and make him
 understand the vision. I therefore would advise you, that
 before you attempt again to comment on the opinions of Rab-
 binical writers, to read them in the original, if you can, and
 not trust to translations, or translators; for they are no better
 than blind leaders of the blind; and often expose the ignorance
 of those that trust to them.

N

You

You observe page 47, "The seventy weeks
 "Mr. Levi says, page 41, are without doubt,
 "four hundred and ninety years, the time from
 "the destruction of the first temple to the de-
 "struction of the second. But," say you, "if
 "there be any truth in history, the interval be-
 "tween those two events was about six hundred
 "and fifty years; and it is by history that pro-
 "phesy must be interpreted." But, why not
 produce those proofs of history, in order to har-
 monise the events in support of your hypothesis?
 Surely, you ought not to have left the subject
 (and that of such importance) in so vague and
 indeterminate a state; but have proved your posi-
 tion, by substantial and undeniable arguments. I
 mean, by fixing a period for the beginning of the
 seventy weeks, and then have proceeded to shew the
 accomplishment of every period, as I have done*.
 We should then have been able to have judged

* At present, Christians have no certain fixed period, from
 whence to begin the seventy weeks: for although they all
 agree in explaining the prophecy, that from the going forth
 of the *commandment* (as they translate it) to restore and build
 Jerusalem unto Messiah (or anointed) prince, shall be seven
 weeks; and sixty-two weeks, (not at all considering, that,
 the sixty-two weeks, reads forward with the remaining part
 of the verse) yet, are they so far from being unanimous con-
 cerning the time from which they commenced, that there are
 almost as many different opinions about it, as there are
 writers upon the subject: but which is no more than the in-
 evitable consequence of explaining Scripture so contrary to
 its true meaning; and plainly shews the difficulties they la-
 bour under, in the maintainance of such absurd positions.

on which side truth existed. But this, I am confident, you are conscious was not in your power to do: on the contrary, you would only have bewildered yourself, in being liable to encounter all the difficulties which every Christian commentator, who has written upon the subject, has involved himself in, by attempting it. Of the truth of this, every candid and dispassionate person will be fully convinced, that chuses to take the pains to read with attention, what Dr. Prideaux hath written upon the subject, in his *Connect.* Vol. II. page 17, &c. &c. For me to follow the doctor through all his turnings and windings, would answer no other purpose, than to perplex the reader, and swell this pamphlet to a volume. One thing, however, I must observe, which is, that by adopting the chimerical opinion of profane historians, in contradiction to Scripture, in order to explain the prophecy so as to make it applicable to Christ, he has not been able (notwithstanding the utmost stretch of human industry) to fix any clear and certain period from whence to begin the seventy weeks. For as he observes, if begun from the first of Cyrus, who granted the first decree, (which may be called a commandment) they will not come low enough to reach any of the events* which are predicted by the prophecy. Neither, as he observes, (*ibid.* page 18,) could they begin from the decree granted by Darius;

* In regard to Jesus.

that is, not from Darius Cadomanus, because, then the 490 years would overshoot the events by many more years than the other would fall short of them. Nor from Darius Nothus as some have thought. Nor from Darius Hystaspes. Neither could they begin from Artaxerxes, who granted the decree to Nehemiah; that is, neither from Artaxerxes Longimanus, Artaxerxes Mnemnon, nor Artaxerxes Ochus, from which some have begun them*. He then proceeds to shew, how some have reckoned by lunar years, &c. But, after the doctor has employed twenty octavo pages of small letter press on the subject, having found out, according to profane history, that, from the death of Christ to the seventh year of Artaxerxes upwards, was 490 years, he has *very wisely* begun them from thence. This, may be cutting the Gordian knot, but I am sure, it is not untying it.

As to what you observe page 35, concerning נחמך, scarcely deserves notice, were it not to expose its futility: for I observed that, נחמך also de-

* For it must be observed, that the doctor had not only undertaken to establish his own hypothesis, but to overturn those which other commentators have adopted, on account of their not coinciding with the events relating to Christ; in doing of which, however, he has been obliged to discard the literal sense of the text: which plainly shews, what expedients he was obliged to make use of, in order to extricate himself from the difficulties which he laboured under in the maintenance of that absurd hypothesis, equally as inconsistent as any of the others he was endeavouring to demolish.

noted "that there should be a cutting off, or separation of seventy weeks." Which plainly shews, that it was to be the *period of time* that was to be cut off. Of this, every unprejudiced person will be convinced, that does but read the page you have quoted.

You say, page 36, "I would farther observe, that Mr. Levi's account of your present sufferings is neither agreeable to *reason*, nor to the *scripture*. It is no where said, either before the captivity, or afterwards, that it was intended as a punishment for not observing the sabbath in particular, but for *sin* in general. It is only said that, during that captivity, the land would keep its sabbaths, which it had not been allowed to do before, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 21. *To fulfil the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiab, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths. For as long as she lay desolate, she kept the sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years.* But this is far from amounting to a proof that this captivity was for no other purpose." But, as in the verses preceding the words you quote, we find it recorded, that the people were slain; Jerusalem and the house of God destroyed; and the remainder carried away captive. And all this, that the land might enjoy her sabbaths, *threescore and ten years*, the time they were in that captivity in Babylon. I think, that all this taken together, amounts to a presumptive proof, that in that captivity they were punished for that sin only. But this will appear in a much stronger light, when

when considered conjunctively with the words of Moses. In Levit. xxvi. 34. where he is evidently speaking of the first captivity, he says, "Then shall the land enjoy her sabbaths, as long as the land lieth desolate," &c. And in verse 36, he speaks of this present captivity, and which on account of its long continuance, he tells them, verse 38, 39. "And ye shall perish among the nations, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up. And they that are left of you shall pine away in their iniquity, in your enemies lands: and also in the iniquities of their fathers shall they pine away with them." This is also a plain proof that we are suffering for the sins of our fathers, as well as our own. In verse 40 and 41, he observes, that after their being brought into the land of their enemies, there were two ways, or means, by which they might expiate their crimes, viz. First, "Or (or if) then their uncircumcised heart be humbled;" that is, shall have sincerely repented of all their sins, and have utterly forsaken them. Second, "Or they then accept the punishment of their iniquity." That is, they receive the full punishment due to their iniquity. But neither of these ends was accomplished during the time of the first captivity. For although those that went up from Babylon, (and which were but a small part of the nation) fasted and prayed, as mentioned in the 9th chapter of Nehemiah, yet, did they not *humble* their *uncircumcised heart*; that is, they did not subdue their evil appetite, by utterly

terly forsaking their sins, but on the contrary still continued in many of them. For in the first place, they had not intirely put away the strange women. Ibid. xiii. 4. xxiii. 24, &c. Neither did they give the proper portion to the Levites, verse 10. They also profaned the sabbath, as mentioned verse 15. "In these days saw I in Judah some treading wine presses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses, &c. &c. "They also oppressed one another by usury," &c. Ibid. v. 1, 2, 3, &c.

All which is a proof, that they had not made a thorough and sincere repentance, so as to forsake their evil ways: for what signifies repentance, without the relinquishing of sin? And therefore, the prophet very properly describes the repentance of the Ninevites, by observing, that the king said, "Yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands." Jonah iii. 8. And in verse 10, he says, "And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way." But he does not say, and God saw their fasting and praying; for that would not have availed them, without a thorough reformation; and therefore, he very properly ascribes their deliverance from the threatened danger, to their departure from their evil ways. But this, the Jewish nation did not do at their return from Babylon; and much less during the time of the second temple, as I have observed in my first Letters. And which is a demonstration, that they did

did not effect the first method proposed for their redemption. As to the second, the full punishment of their iniquity; that I have already shewn they did not receive, on account of the shortness of the captivity, being but seventy years, and which it was specified, was to be while the land enjoyed and kept her sabbaths. And, as no other sin is mentioned as the immediate cause of the first captivity but this, as is clear from the words above quoted, we must take it for granted, that during that captivity, they did not receive any punishment for any other crime.

As to what you say, page 37, "Besides, in
" how capricious and unworthy a manner, does
" Mr. Levi represent the God of your fathers,
" the righteous Judge of all the earth, as acting;
" in punishing for one particular sin by a heavy
" calamity, and after shewing all the marks of
" forgiveness and reconciliation, reserving his
" greatest vengeance for another season, not to
" commence till six hundred years afterwards."
But this is a very unfair conclusion drawn from my words: for I never asserted, that God had shewn them *all* the marks of forgiveness and reconciliation, and to have reserved his greatest vengeance for another season. On the contrary, I asserted, that the angel informed Daniel, (first Letters, page 40—44,) that as their sin was very grievous, it would not be atoned for by their captivity of seventy years, (and which was not attended with any peculiar hardships during its continuance,

continuance, as you observe,) consequently, they had not *all the marks of forgiveness and reconciliation*: but only, that God in his infinite mercy, was pleased to grant them this visitation. Ibid. page 41—45, 46, &c. That they might thereby the better be enabled to work their repentance, and make an atonement for their sins. But, if they should not, they were then to go into captivity again, and there remain, till they had either thoroughly repented of their sins, or had received the full punishment for all their iniquities. Now, I would fain ask you, or any candid person, whether this is representing God as acting in a capricious and unworthy manner? On the contrary, I think it will appear plain, that God acted according to his eternal justice, tempered with mercy, in suffering them to return to their own land, and thereby affording them a better opportunity to expiate their sins, than they could otherwise have had. But, if they abused that mercy by not making a good use of it, his justice then required, that they should go into captivity to receive a punishment for *all* their sins, as well those committed before, as after the said visitation.

You observe, page 38, "On the plan of Mr. Levi, even your next restoration to your country, will be no proof that God has forgiven your nation *all* the sins they committed before the Babylonish captivity, to say nothing of those committed since." Although, I have fully explained the nature of the present captivity, and

that its long continuance was, that they might therein receive a full punishment for *all* their sins, so as *to finish* (or consume) *transgression, make an end of sins, and to make expiation for iniquity.* Yet, in order to remove, even the most faint shadow of the substance of an objection from your reasoning, I shall adduce a few prophecies in favour of my proposition, and then shew, that they are applicable to none but the present captivity.

Isai. xl. 1, 2. "Comfort ye, comfort ye my
 " people, saith your God. Speak ye to the heart
 " of (or comfortably to) Jerusalem, and cry unto
 " her, that her warefare (or appointed time) is ac-
 " complished, that her iniquity is pardoned; for
 " she hath received of the LORD's hands double
 " for all her sins." Jerem. xxxi. 8, 9. "Behold, I
 " will bring them from the north country, and ga-
 " ther them from the coasts of the earth, and with
 " them the blind and the lame, the woman with
 " child, and her that travaileth with child to-
 " gether, a great company. They shall come
 " with weeping, and with supplications will I
 " lead them; I will cause them to walk by the
 " rivers of waters, in a strait way wherein they
 " shall not stumble: for I am a father to Israel,
 " and Ephraim is my first born." Ibid. xxxiii.
 7, 8. "And I will cause the captivity of Judah,
 " and the captivity of Israel to return, and will
 " build them as at the first. And I will cleanse
 " them from ALL their iniquity, whereby they
 " have sinned against me, and I will pardon ALL
 " their

“ their iniquities whereby they have sinned, and
“ whereby they have transgressed against me.”
In Ezek. xi. 16, 17, &c. “ Therefore say, Thus
“ saith the Lord God, although I have cast them
“ far off among the nations, and although I have
“ scattered them among the countries, yet will I
“ be to them as a little sanctuary in the countries
“ where they shall come. Therefore say, Thus
“ saith the Lord God, I will even gather you
“ from the people, and assemble you out of the
“ countries where ye have been scattered, and I
“ will give you the land of Israel. And they
“ shall come thither, and they shall take away all
“ the detestable things thereof, and all the abomi-
“ nations thereof from thence. And I will give
“ them one heart, and I will put a new spirit
“ within you, and I will take the stony heart out
“ of their flesh, and I will give them an heart of
“ flesh, that they may walk in my statutes, and
“ keep mine ordinances, and do them,” &c. Ibid.
xxxvi. 22. “ Therefore say unto the house of
“ Israel, Thus saith the Lord God, I do not
“ (this) for your sakes, O house of Israel, but
“ for mine holy name’s sake, which ye have pro-
“ faned among the nations, whither ye went,” &c.
And verse 24, &c. “ For I will take you from
“ among the nations, and gather you out of all
“ countries, and will bring you into your own
“ land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon
“ you, and ye shall be clean; from ALL your
“ filthiness, and from ALL your idols will I cleanse
O 2 “ you.

“you. A new heart also will I give you, and a
“new spirit will I put within you,” &c. &c. Verse
33. “Thus saith the Lord God, In the day
“that I shall have cleansed you from ALL your
“iniquities, I will cause you to dwell in the
“cities,” &c. Ibid. xxxvii. 21, 22, &c. “And
“say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God, Be-
“hold, I will take the children of Israel from
“among the nations whither they be gone, and
“will gather them on every side, and bring them
“into their own land. And I will make them
“one nation in the land upon the mountains of
“Israel, and one king shall be king to them all;
“and they shall be no more two nations, neither
“shall they be divided into two kingdoms any
“more at all: neither shall they defile themselves
“any more with their idols, nor with their de-
“testable things, NOR WITH ANY OF THEIR
“TRANSGRESSIONS; but I will save them out
“of all their dwelling-places, where they have
“sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be
“my people, and I will be their God. And
“David my servant (shall be) king over them:
“and they all shall have one shepherd: they
“shall also walk in my judgments, and observe
“my statutes, and do them,” &c. “Moreover, I
“will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall
“be an EVERLASTING COVENANT with them: and
“I will place them, and multiply them, and will
“set my sanctuary in the midst of them for ever-
“more.”

These

These prophecies, besides a number of others, clearly prove, that in this present captivity, we are to be cleansed from ALL our iniquities, &c. And what is of still greater consequence, we are assured, that we shall never return to them any more, because the heart of stone will be taken from us, and a new heart and a new spirit given unto us, that we may continue to walk in God's statutes and judgments FOR EVER.

Before I conclude this letter, I must take notice of what you say, page 46. "By Mr. Levi's own confession, there was a Messiah cut off about that time, and who could this be but Jesus?" But, dear Sir, you must surely have paid no attention either to Scripture, or profane history, when you wrote this. For from the fifteenth of Tiberias Cæsar, to the destruction of the temple by Titus, was upwards of forty years. Now, if the anointed was to be cut off after the sixty-nine weeks, and in the one half of the seventieth week, the sacrifice, and the oblation was to be made to cease, and in the other, the desolation was to take place, as is manifest from the words of the prophecy, it is clear, according to history, that Jesus could not be the person; because, as I have observed, that from the time of his suffering, to the destruction of the temple, which was to be accomplished in the seventieth week, was forty years.

I am, Sir,

Your's, &c.

D. LEVI.

LETTERS

TO

DR. COOPER,

IN ANSWER TO HIS

One Great Argument for the Truth of Christianity, from a single Prophecy.

By DAVID LEVI,

AUTHOR OF LINGUA SACRA, THE CEREMONIES OF THE
JEW, &c.

והפכתם את דברי אלהים חיים.

ISAIAH xxiii. 36.

LETTER I.

REV. SIR,

I Received your volume, intitled, "The One
 " Great Argument for the Truth of Christi-
 " anity," &c. from Mr. Johnson, my publisher;
 for which, I thus publicly return you my most
 sincere thanks. And this, I think myself under
 the greater obligation to do, because, as I under-
 stand, your sole motive was the hope that it
 would lead me to embrace what you think to be
 the truth. This being the case, you may be as-
 sured, I read it with the greatest attention. But,
 judge of my surprise, when I found, that, a pro-
 phesy, which you call "One Great Argument for
 "the Truth of Christianity," and which as you ob-
 serve, page 7, "When it is rightly explained,
 "such is its clearness,—such its force,—and such
 "its perspicuity and precision,—that the whole
 "dispute between Jews and Christians, might be
 "brought to an issue, upon this very point,—nay,
 "—even the whole argument for Christianity,
 "might be rested upon the wonderful completion
 "of this prediction, as delivered by the prophet
 "Isaiah, and referred to by the Evangelist St.
 "Matthew," did not contain one solid reason, to
 prove its right to the title of "One Great Argu-
 ment

ment for the Truth of Christianity." And therefore, I do not wonder, that all former commentators (as you observe, page 6,) have not been able to derive any strength from it, to the evidences of Christianity. For in truth, it hath not the least reference to an event that, as it is pretended, was to take place almost six hundred years after. And this, every person conversant in the Hebrew, is fully sensible of; and therefore, unless they had understood it in a different sense from what you do, they were sensible, they must have done great violence to the text. This, Sir, I apprehend, easily accounts for your supposing that they totally misunderstood it; because they attempted to explain it in a manner, as nearly as possible (consistent with their hypothesis,) in agreement with the original Hebrew; rightly judging, that in a subject of such importance, no dependance ought to be placed on translations, however correct, while recourse may be had to the original. This, naturally leads me to take notice of what you observe, (Introduction, page 23,) "That all the alterations made in the translation are taken from the SEPTUAGINT, NOT from the HEBREW." And the reason of which, you honestly confess to be, your "ignorance of the latter language." Now, though I highly admire, nay, I may say, almost revere you, for this candid confession, and which certainly indicates, a great and noble mind, in love with truth, yet, I must tell you plainly, that to criticise on Scripture, requires not only a great knowledge in the Hebrew,

brew, but also a thorough acquaintance with the *idiom* and *phraseology* of the Sacred Language, in which the prophecies were delivered*, as will be perceived in my explanation of the prophecy. I must also tell you, Sir, that it is not my intention in these Letters to follow you page by page, through both your Lectures : and that, for the following reasons. First, because, it would swell these Letters alone to the bulk of a volume. Second, because it appears to me, that your hypothesis is founded upon mistaken principles, consequently, I have nothing to do but to expose the futility of them, by shewing the true meaning of the words of the prophet : for if the foundation is once proved to be rotten, the superstructure must fall of course. Third, because, this prophecy will naturally fall under review in my Dissertation on the Prophecies, I therefore, shall only take notice of the prophecy, beginning at the tenth verse, and ending at the sixteenth. If you should think proper to make any objections to my explanation of the words of the prophet, and they should appear before my Dissertation on the Prophecies goes to press, I purpose paying due attention to them, in the said Dissertation. I am,

With the greatest respect,

Rev. Sir,

Your very humble Servant.

D. LEVI.

* See *Lingua Sacra, Radix.* 7th ed.

LETTER II.

*An Explanation of the 7th Chapter of Isaiah, from
verse 10, to 16, inclusive.*

REV. SIR.

AGREEABLE to what I intimated in the preceding Letter, of not following you page by page, I now purpose taking a review of the prophecy. But, before I enter thereon, it will be proper to explain some words used by the prophet, as that will be the means of saving much trouble and confusion in settling the subject in debate.

First, וַיֹּסֶף, this is derived from the root יָסַף, to add; exceed, &c. And therefore, properly denotes *and he added*: that is, he added this to the preceding: i. e. he continued the discourse. This, is the true sense of the word; especially, if we consider that the ו *vau* conjunctive, always used in Hebrew * to join periods and sentences together, is prefixed to it. Second, אוֹת, This, in its primary sense denotes *a sign, or mark*†. As, כִּי אוֹת הוּא, It is *a sign*. Exod. xxi. 13. זֹאת אוֹת הַבְּרִית This is *the token* of the covenant. Gen. ix. 12. וְהָיָה לְאוֹת בְּרִית And it shall be *for a token* of the covenant. Ibid xvii. 11. וְקָשַׁרְתָּם לְאוֹת עַל יָדְךָ And thou shalt bind them *for a sign* upon

* See Lingua Sacra, Part. I. chap. ix. sect. 3. page 137.

† Ibid. Part. II. Radix. אוֹת.

thine hand, Deut. vi. 8. אִישׁ עַל דָּגְלוֹ בְּאַתֶּת Every man by his standard, *with the ensigns*. Numb. ii. 2. Besides a number of other passages in Scripture, by far too numerous to be adduced here. Hence it is manifest, the word אֹת was not used by the prophet to denote a great and stupendous miracle, but only a sign of their deliverance from their then trouble. And in the same sense, does the prophet use the term in chap. viii. 18. "Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me, are for signs and for wonders in Israel." Now, it is clear, I presume, that the birth of the prophet's children was not in a miraculous manner, but in the natural way, the same as other children: as it was by their names only, they were accounted as signs to the children of Israel: for as SHEAR-JASHUB signified a remnant shall return, or be saved, the prophet's son was so called, in order to be a sign to them of that event. The same of Maher-shalal-hash-baz. And thus also was the child that was to be called Immanuel, to be a sign that God was with them, i. e. was their assistance; and therefore their enemies would not be able to prevail against them. Third, תִּלְאִי and הִלְאֹת, both derived from the Radix לָאָה, to weary; fatigue, &c. But they do by no means denote to contend. Fourth, עֲלֻמָּה denotes a young woman; being derived from עָלַם, A youth, stripling*, &c. As, בֶּן מִי יְהוֹה הָעֵלָם Whose

* See Lingua Sacra, Radix עָלַם.

son is *this stripling*? 1 Sam. xvii. 56, וְאִם כֹּה אָמַר לְעַלְמִים. But if I say thus *unto the young man*. Ibid. xx. 22. Now, as עַלְמִים is the Masc. and denotes *a young man*; so עַלְמָה being the Fem. denotes *a young woman*: whether she hath been acquainted with man or not, I must however, observe, that it is *never* used in the Hebrew, to denote simply *a virgin*: but only in the same sense as נַעֲרָה*, *a damsel*. That this is the real meaning of the word עַלְמָה is clear from Scripture, for whenever it would particularly point out to us *a virgin*, in the strict sense of the word, it makes use of the term בְּתוּלָה† A VIRGIN: as will be clearly perceived from what follows. וְהָיָה הָעַלְמָה הַיּוֹצֵאת לְשֹׂאֵב. And it shall come to pass, that *the young woman* which cometh out to draw (water), Gen. xxiv. 43. Here, the servant expressed himself in general terms; and as a proof of this, he uses the term נַעֲרָה in verse 14, as synonymous. But, when Scripture speaks of her, and would impress our minds with an idea of her purity, it does not use the term נַעֲרָה only, because that would not be sufficiently expressive, as may be perceived in the following example, וְהַנַּעֲרָה טֹבַת מְרֹאֶה מְאֹד בְּתוּלָה. And the damsel (was) very fair to look upon, (and she was) *a virgin*. Ibid 16. And this, I am free to assert, is the uniform language of Scripture. See Deut. xxii. 23—28, &c. 1 King i. 7. Esth. ii. 3, &c. I shall now take notice of that expression of

* Lingua Sacra, Radix נַעַר.

† Ibid. Radix בָּתַל.

Solomon, about which so much hath been said, in order to establish the sense of the word *עַלְמָה* to denote a virgin; but which plainly shews that those who espouse this opinion were far from rightly understanding Solomon*. The passage, *וְדַרְךְ נָכָר בְּעַלְמָה*. And the way of a man *with a young woman*, Prov. xxx. 19. It is clear from the context, that Solomon did not mean a virgin, but a young woman, of whom man had already had carnal knowledge; because he observes in the preceding verse, "There be
 " three (things which) are too wonderful for me,
 " yea, four I know not: the way of an eagle in
 " the air; the way of a serpent upon the rock;
 " the way of a ship in the midst of the sea; and
 " the way of a man with a young woman. Such,"
 saith he, "(is) the way of an adulterous woman;
 " she eateth and wipeth her mouth, and saith, I
 " have done no wickedness."

This is an exact description of a woman that hath already known man; for in such a case, it is impossible to come at the truth of her being defiled, or not, unless by ocular demonstration, as no mark or track is left whereby to trace it, any more than that of the others which he had mentioned; but which, it is manifest, is not the case with *a virgin*. From all which it is clear, that *עַלְמָה*, in the Hebrew is used to denote only *young* in years, whether it be a married woman, or a maid; but is never used to denote *a virgin*, in the strict

* Mr. Granville Sharp, &c. See his Remarks on the Seventh Chapter of Isaiah, page 12.

sense of the word. On the contrary, **בתולה** is the word always used to denote strictly a VIRGIN*, I must farther observe, that if **עלמה** strictly denoted a virgin, we should not say of the male **עלם**, any more than we do **בתול** from **בתולה**: whereas we say **נער** a youth, and **נערה** a damsel; **עלם** a stripling, or young man, and **עלמה** a young woman: and the reason of which is obvious; because they only denote youth, in which situation both sexes may be: but as **בתולה** simply denotes a virgin, i. e. a woman unacquainted with man; **בתול** can by no means be applied to the male sex.

Fifth, **קץ** is derived from the root **קוץ**, and which denotes to loath, abhor, &c. (See *Lingua Sacra*, Radix **קוץ**, 3d.) but is never used to denote to reverence, as you assert, page 222. "This was a land, therefore, which they were so far from ABHORRING, that they REVERED or REVERENCED it; and so indeed the word MIGHT and OUGHT to have been translated." You say farther, "It is so translated in some places of Scripture, Levit. xix. 30.—xxvi. 2.—Psalm. lxxxix. 7.—cxi. 9." But, dear Sir, is it possible you can say this deliberately! for my part, I could scarcely believe my eyes when I read it, as I judged it almost impossible, that a divine of the church of England, in the act of explaining to his audience, in the most solemn manner, one of the most important prophecies in Scripture, (according to his own words)

* And hence **בתולה** is used figuratively in Scripture to denote kingdoms not brought into subjection.

should so far forget himself, as to assert that the word *נָפַח*, which denotes *to abhor, loath, &c.* according to the real sense of Hebrew. "OUGHT to be translated TO REVERE OR REVERENCE; and that it is thus translated in several parts of Scripture." And in proof thereof, attempt to produce passages so translated; but which in reality have no more relation to the word *נָפַח*, than *abhor* has to *reverence*. This, is such a violent outrage, against all sense and meaning of language, as tends to throw every thing into the greatest confusion; and if asserted deliberately, in order to mislead, is deserving of the severest censure: but if owing to ignorance, (as I hope is your case) is yet, nevertheless, very reprehensible; because, no man ought to presume to comment on Scripture, especially to correct or alter translations, that is not perfectly well acquainted with the original. And therefore I leave you to judge, how great must be the surprise and astonishment of both your hearers, and readers, when they see it proved to a demonstration, that the examples which you have quoted in support of your translation, have not the least foundation in truth; but on the contrary, are so directly opposite to that so translated by you in the passage before us, as light is to darkness, or black to white.

The first example is from Levit. xix. 30. and which, for both your and the reader's better understanding, I shall give in Hebrew and English. *אֶת־שַׁבְּתֹתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ וּמִקֳּדְשִׁי תִירָאוּ* Ye shall keep my sabbaths and YE SHALL REVERENCE my sanctuary.

Here

Here I grant that **תִּירָא** is properly translated to REVERENCE, being derived from the radix **ירא**, To fear, &c. But surely, no one in the least acquainted with the Hebrew language, will be so hardy as to assert, that **קץ** and **תִּירָא** are synonymous: for that would be equal to asserting that ABHOR and REVERENCE in the English language are also synonymous; but which, I am confident, no man in his senses ever did, or ever will attempt. The same objection lies against your second example, as it contains the exact words of the first; for which reason I shall forbear quoting it. Your third example is Psalm. lxxxix. 7. In which the word translated IN REVERENCE, is **נִיחָא**, niphangl, Particip. likewise derived from **ירא**. Your fourth example from Psalm cxi. 9. is also **נִיחָא**, derived from the same as the preceding.

Hence the fallacy of your explanation is, I presume, clearly proved; and which plainly shews what small dependance is to be placed, and how little reliance can be had on you scheme; and which I may say, is founded upon error, and supported by assertions, that, when looked into, are found to make directly against it. I forbear making any remarks on such a method of proceeding, because I would not wilfully wound your feelings: though at the same time, I cannot help saying a few words in vindication of the character of former commentators, whom you have so frequently reprehended; and for doing of what? Why, for NOT CORRECTING that, which did not stand in need of ANY CORRECTION

RECTION. This will appear clear from your own words ; for you observe, page 214, “ I must take
 “ notice of an error in the translation of the lat-
 “ ter clause in the sixteenth verse, which, it is
 “ truly astonishing, none of the other commen-
 “ tators should have observed and corrected, as
 “ it is equally incongruous with their interpreta-
 “ tion as mine.” The candid reader will now
 be able to judge, which is the most truly astonish-
 ing, whether the former commentators not cor-
 recting that which did not stand in need of any,
 or your correcting of an error, where none ever
 existed ; but in doing of which, you have given
 such a sense to the words, as is diametrically op-
 posite, and totally repugnant to its true, real, and
 invariable sense.

Sixth, *כיפני*, is derived from the root *פנה*, and
 denotes *because*, &c. (See *Lingua Sacra*, radix
פנה). Having now explained these terms, I shall
 without any farther preamble, enter on the explana-
 tion of the prophecy.

“ And the LORD continued speaking (or
 “ added to speak) to AHAZ (by the mouth of
 “ the prophet) saying, Ask thee a sign of the
 “ LORD thy God.” That is, go not to enquire of
 Baal Ekron, or the other strange gods, neither
 send to the king of Assyria for help ; but ask it
 of the LORD THY GOD : he that hath created the
 world, and who, consequently hath power over all ;
 and who also, by his particular providence in his
 superintendence of Israel, is peculiarly their, and

Q

THY

THY GOD. Of him, says the prophet, ask a sign : of thine own accord require a sign of him, in confirmation of the truth of my words. " Ask in " the depth, or in the height above. But Ahaz " said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the " Lord." This answer of Ahaz, is nothing more than deep-laid hypocrisy and dissimulation, as we shall see presently : for though it might at first view appear, as an act of piety, by pretending not to be willing to tempt God, agreeable to what is said in Deut. vi. 16. " Ye shall not tempt the " LORD your God." Yet, on a close attention to the words of the prophet in the subsequent verse, it will be found to be a mere deception ; and that Ahaz did actually not believe in the *particular providence* of God. This is what Ahaz meant by saying, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord ; because (says he) it is but labour in vain, as I do not believe that he gives himself any trouble about those affairs. This is the real meaning of Ahaz's impious answer, although expressed under the veil of piety. But the truth of it being made known to the prophet, he very aptly answers him as in the next verse. " And he " said, Hear ye now*, O house of David, *is it a* small

* It must be observed, that the expression " Hear ye now, " O house of David," was not to arouse their attention to the importance of the stupendous miracle the prophet was about to foretell, as you observe, page 119. For in truth, no stupendous miracle was intended, but simply a sign, and which

"small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also?" Ahaz, says the prophet, I know full well what you mean; and though to outward appearance it may look as piety, yet to God, who knoweth all secrets, the truth of it is well known; and therefore, although it may appear as a small thing to weary men, by being able to impose on them in this manner, yet I must tell you, it is no such easy matter, thus to impose on my God, by saying one thing and meaning another. "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign. Behold THE YOUNG WOMAN HATH CONCEIVED, and beareth a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." THE YOUNG WOMAN here mentioned, seems to be a person well known to Ahaz, because the prophet makes use of the demonstrative, as signifying the definitive article *the*; i. e. THE young woman there before me, and which might have been a daughter of Ahaz, or another of the royal family, lately married: whereas had he spoken of a person intirely unknown to Ahaz, he would have said עלמה A young woman;

is clear from the prophet's not using the terms מופת . נס or פלא, generally used in Scripture, to denote stupendous miracles. But it was only an expression made use of by the prophet, in imitation of our master Moses; for as he, in speaking to Korah of his rebellion, makes use of the expression, "Hear now, I pray you, ye sons of Levi," Numb. xvi. 8. So also Isaiah said, "Hear ye now, O house of David." For it was the constant practice of this prophet to attempt to imitate Moses, as may be observed, by comparing Deut. xxxii. 1. with Isaiah, i. 1, &c.

especially if we consider the correctness of the style of this prophet. And, as a farther proof of what I have advanced, the prophet makes use of the present tense **תִּהְיֶה** IS WITH CHILD; i. e. hath conceived already; and which he certainly would not have done, had he meant a person that was to conceive six hundred years after; for then he would have said **תִּהְיֶה** *Shall conceive*; but he made use of the same language, as the angel did to Hagar, when he told her she was with child. See Gen. xvi. 11. “ Butter and honey shall he eat, *at his knowing* to refuse the evil, and choose the good. “ For before the child shall know to refuse the “ evil, and choose the good, the land shall be “ forsaken, which thou abhorrest BECAUSE of both “ its kings.”

The circumstance of the child's eating butter and honey, was to denote a state of plenty, (as Jarchi, and Abarbanal justly observe. See also Lowth, in Locum,) and which was to arise from their deliverance, (by which peace and plenty would be restored) that was to take place before the child should know to refuse evil, and choose good; and which was actually accomplished, when the king of Syria slew Rezin, and Hosea the son of Elah slew Pekah. See also chap. viii. 4. Now, this was a sign, that they could at any rate rely upon, and easily convict the prophet of uttering a falsehood, (as, no doubt they would have done on failure thereof;) because it was to be accomplished in so short a time. But it would
by

by no means have made the least impression upon impious Ahaz, to have told him of an event that was to take place six or seven hundred years after; as he would naturally have told the prophet, that he was much in the right, in fixing on such a distant period, that neither of them would ever see. I must also observe, that by my properly rendering the last clause of the sixteenth verse, we are not only informed what land it was that was to be forsaken, and which they abhorred; but also what is of still greater consequence, the reason why they abhorred it; viz. BECAUSE of its two kings; i. e. because of the injuries which they had received from its two kings: so that the two kings of which the land was to be forsaken, are also distinctly specified; and which clearly points out to us, the full completion of the prophecy in the time of Ahas.

As to what you observe concerning the sceptre departing from Judah, appears to me to be foreign to the subject in debate: for as I have clearly, and I hope satisfactorily, proved to every impartial mind, who the two kings were that the land was to be forsaken of, the conclusion drawn from that prophecy falls to the ground. But, do not think, Sir, that I say this in order to evade the force of it by an examination, because I have already explained it in *Lingua Sacra, Radix 7*; where I have shewn, that it can by no means bear the explanation given of it by Christians in general,

neral, much less that given by you. And that I may not swell these letters to too great a bulk, is another reason for my declining to take notice of it at present; but in my Dissertation on the Prophecies, it will be considered at large.

I am, Sir,

Your's, &c.

D. LEVI

(A)
L E T T E R

T O

MR. B I C H E N O,

OCCASIONED BY HIS

Friendly Address to the Jews,

A N D A

LETTER TO MR. DAVID LEVI,

CONTAINING

REMARKS ON MR. LEVI'S ANSWER

T O

DR. PRIESTLEY'S FIRST LETTERS TO THE JEWS.

BY DAVID LEVI,

AUTHOR OF LINGUA SACRA, THE CEREMONIES OF THE
JEWS, &c.

אני ה" הוא שמי וכבודי לאחר לא אתן

ISAIAH, xlii. 8.

LETTER TO MR. BICHENO.

REV. SIR,

I Received your friendly Address to the Jews, and also the letter containing Remarks on my Answer to Dr. Priestley's First Letters to the Jews, from your friend; for which I return you my most sincere thanks: and I am happy to find in it, that true spirit of candour and liberality, so necessary to an inquiry of this nature; but which I am sorry to say, I have not experienced from some of my opponents*.

What you observe, page 7, " Free and unbiased inquiry is the glory of human nature, " To be a heathen, a Jew, or a Christian, because " our fathers were so, is unbecoming any reasonable creature, arrived at years of understanding. " That man is of no religion, whose profession is " not from conviction; and there can be no conviction but from inquiry. He who grounds his " faith on the authority of others, and then studies " only for confirmation, seeks not truth by the " light of truth, and is therefore ever liable to " embrace falsehood; and should he be so very " fortunate as to embrace truth, in him it is no

* Anti-Socinus, alias Anselm Bayly, and J. H. Swain.

" virtue."

"virtue." Perfectly coincides with my principles, as you may perhaps have observed in my Answer to Dr. Priestley's First Letters, page 91—95. And, I cannot forbear observing, that whoever attempts to stifle a free, and candid inquiry of this nature, is an enemy to truth, and true religion.

This inquiry, I purpose conducting on a most extensive scale, and in a manner, (as appears to me, and those Christians to whom I have communicated my plan) the most just, fair, and equitable, as well as the least objectionable. I mean a Dissertation on the Prophecies. It is to consist of two parts: Part I, to contain all such prophecies as both Jews and Christians apply to the Messiah:—and Part II, all such, as Christians only apply to him. By this means, not a single prophecy will be omitted, but all will be brought under review. The IMPARTIAL PUBLIC will then be able to judge, on which side truth lies; and to that tribunal we ought both of us cheerfully to submit, as it seldom errs in its judgment, for you know, Sir, *Vox populi, vox Dei.*

This, Sir, is one reason for my not entering into an examination of the parallel passages, or prophecies, produced by you, Mr. Swain, or *Anti-Socinus*, alias Anselm Bayly, in support of Christ's divinity; because they will naturally fall under my review in that Dissertation.

As to your Remarks on my Answer to Dr. Priestley's First Letters, you will find many of them answered in the preceding part of this pamphlet,

phlet, in my Answer to his Second Letters; I shall therefore forbear taking any farther notice of them at present, as it would only lead to a repetition of what I have there observed.

Your prophecy, from Isaiah, vii. 14. mentioned page 25, you will find fully, and I hope satisfactorily answered in my Letters to Dr. Cooper, which immediately precede your's. Of consequence, there is scarcely any thing else in your pamphlet that I recollect worthy of notice at present.

One thing, however, I cannot avoid taking notice of, because you mention it more than once, (page 37, 40, &c.) viz. the peace that was to take place at the coming of the Messiah; but which seems to be flatly contradicted by what you assert page 7: for you there say, "It must be owned, to
" the reproach of professing Christians, that through
" the impiety of their lives, their corruptions of
" the Christian doctrine, their intolerance towards
" each other, and their persecutions of your nation," &c. &c. Here you have at once given us a most horrid picture of the peaceable kingdom of the Messiah, if Christianity be it; for as to what you observe presently after, in order (as I apprehend) to meliorate its features, does not mend it in the least, as will appear from your own words, as follow. "Yet, seeing these are no test
" of the truth or falsehood of our Scriptures, any
" more than the idolatry and other bad practices
" of your forefathers, were of the truth or falsehood of the laws of Moses." But this argument

ment is a mere fallacy, founded on erroneous principles. For though I freely grant, that persecution, intolerance, &c. are no test of the truth or falsehood of your Scriptures, any more than idolatry, &c. was the test of ours; yet, do I insist upon it, that persecution, bloodshed, &c. is a test of the truth or falsehood of the Messiah, whose characteristic was to be peace; as may be proved from a number of prophecies (which I can produce, if necessary,) as well as those quoted by you, page 37, 40, &c. Mr. Swain also, in page 40, calls the Messiah, *the prince of peace*. Hence it is manifest, that as one of the principal marks of the Messiah, is the universal peace that is to prevail at his coming, it is evident, that its opposite, viz. war, bloodshed, &c. must be allowed to be a proper test of the truth or falsehood of the person of the Messiah. For if a kingdom, which we are informed by the prophecies, is to consist of UNIVERSAL PEACE, is found to contain little else but *intolerance, persecutions, bloodshed, massacres*, &c. it is a sure and infallible sign, that it cannot be the kingdom so foretold. Of this, you seem to be so sensible, that you endeavour to evade the force of it, by asking (page 72) "Have
" the prophets any where said that the doctrine
" of the Messiah's kingdom, would *instantaneously*
" produce its great effects, in enlightening the
" Gentiles, in taming the ferocity, and in subdu-
" ing the wickedness of men: so that they shall
" no longer hurt or destroy?" You answer,
" No." But I say, YES, undoubtedly; and which

may be clearly proved from the very prophecy you there quote, viz. Isaiah, xi. 10, 11. In both which verses, it says, "In that day." Now if there is any meaning in language, *in that day* certainly means at that time; i. e. the time of the Messiah. Nay, I may say, even before the coming of the Messiah, as will be shewn in the sequel; so that it will take place *instantaneously*, because, that is the principal office of Elijah, the forerunner of the Messiah. But you are obliged to acknowledge, Ibid. that "The doctrine of Jesus hath not yet produced all the effects which the prophets predicted." What! in almost EIGHTEEN HUNDRED YEARS hath the doctrine of Jesus not produced all the effects, which the prophets have predicted to be fulfilled in the person of the Messiah! Why then, I think, it is a presumptive proof, that he cannot be the Messiah so predicted by the prophets. This will be more fully evinced from the words of Jesus himself. Matth. x. 34. "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's foes *shall be* they of his own household." In Luke, xii. 51. he says, "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, nay, but rather division. For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three.

" The

“ The father shall be divided against the son, and
“ the son against the father : the mother against
“ the daughter, and the daughter against the mo-
“ ther ; the mother-in-law against her daughter-
“ in-law, and the daughter-in-law against her mo-
“ ther-in-law.” Now, what can these words of
Jesus mean but this ? You, says he, speaking to
his disciples, &c. suppose, according to the pro-
phets, that the Messiah’s kingdom is to be a
peaceable one, (as they actually did, as is clear
from several parts of the New Testament) as con-
sisting of universal peace ; of course, you suppose
that I am come to give this peace. But this I tell
you, you must not expect of me, for I am so far
from giving peace, that on the contrary, I am come
to give *a sword, division*, &c. Can this, now, Sir,
be the Messiah foretold by the prophets ? for he
has given a description of himself, that is as dia-
metrically opposite to the character of the Messiah,
as allowed on all hands to be foretold by the pro-
phets, as light is to darkness. Consider, I be-
seech you, Sir, your own words, page 86, “ A
“ messenger whom all the Jewish nation took for
“ a prophet announced his approach.” This, I
suppose, you found on Matth. xi. 14. “ This is
“ Elias which was for to come.” Now, this ex-
pression of Matthew is founded on the prophecy of
Malach. iv. 5, 6. “ Behold, I will send you Eli-
“ jah the prophet, &c. And he shall turn the
“ heart of the fathers to the children, and the
“ heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come
“ and

“ smite the earth with a curse.” And, agreeable to this prophecy, the Evangelist endeavours to impress on our mind the idea of John’s being the Elias so foretold, and who was to effect this universal peace and unanimity among mankind : for Luke, chap. i. 17. says, “ And he shall go before
“ him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn
“ the hearts of the fathers to the children,” &c. But, whoever seriously considers the words of Jesus above cited, must be fully convinced, that John could not be the Elias foretold by the prophet, nor Jesus the Messiah ; because the character of Jesus, as given by himself, so flatly contradicted the words of the prophet. That the Almighty God, the God of our fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, may be pleased to lead you into the path of truth, is the sincere wish of,

Sir,

Your true friend, and

Humble servant,

D. LEVI.

A LETTER

A
L E T T E R

T O

DR. K R A U T E R,

OCCASIONED BY HIS

Examination of Mr. David Levi's Objections,

I N H I S

LETTERS TO DR. PRIESTLEY.

BY DAVID LEVI,

AUTHOR OF LINGUA SACRA, THE CEREMONIES OF THE
JEWS, &c.

ה'ש אלה מבלעדי

ISAIAH, xlii. 8.

A

LETTER TO DR. KRAUTER.

REV. SIR,

I Have read your examination of my objections in my Letters to Dr. Priestley, concerning which I shall at present say a few words. As to your examination of the 1st, 2d, 3d, and 6th of my objections, I must inform you, that you will find them answered in my present Letters to Dr. Priestley, in the preceding part of this pamphlet: I shall therefore, in this letter, only take notice of your 4th objection, viz. *the sending of the devils into the herd of swine, by which they ran into the sea and were destroyed.*

Before I proceed to consider your examination of this objection, I must first remark, that I have already observed, (page 43) that the *exorcising* or *casting out* devils, was no proof of a divine mission; because, as I have there shewn, the heathens, &c. also laid claim to the working of such miracles; and in such a manner, that Christians themselves were not able to deny, or detect it. This being premised, it will be proper to inquire, whether (as you observe, page 40,) Jesus did "actually send the devils into the herd of swine, and so cause them to run into the sea and perish!" I do not mean that part of the argument you make use of, viz. the distinction between *permit-*
ting.

ing and sending; because, that is a mere fallacy; for if they could not enter into the herd of swine without his permission, as is manifest from their beseeching him *to suffer* them to enter; and as it must be allowed, that he knew the consequence of such permission, would be the destruction of the swine, it is indifferent, whether he permitted, or sent them, since the effect was equally the same; and which could not have come to pass without his consent: of course, he must be responsible for the loss of the swine; consequently, this observation of yours, does not in the least weaken the force of my objection. But what I mean is, whether, according to the Gospel account of this miracle, it was actually performed. What makes me doubt it, is your own observation: for you say, page 43, “Is it not then strange that others, and that even
“now-a-days, should officiously undertake to vindicate their rights, and to sue for their losses;
“and still more strange, that Jews should? Can
“this be an effect of tenderness and love of
“justice? For all which can be said for them
“amounts to this; What right had Jesus to
“cause the destruction of another man’s property?
“What, if I should return the question, and ask,
“What right had this people to feed herds of
“swine in a country by the laws of which they
“were forbidden food, defiling the inhabitants,
“and where they must be a nuisance?” This, is most certainly true, Sir, and therefore, I do not think it credible that there were any herd of swine

in the country. What should Jews do with swine? for they are not only forbidden to eat swine's flesh, but are also forbid to touch the carcase *, that they might not defile themselves. This, I think, is a presumptive proof, that this miracle was not literally performed. And if it was, it must appear to every impartial person, to be a great piece of injustice done to the proprietors of the swine; and I insist upon it, that Jesus had no right to destroy the property of those men, especially, if as I think, it is clear, that he might have freed the country from them, in a far more eligible manner: for could he not have bound them down into the bottomless pit, and then, not only that country, but every other, would have been intirely freed from them? Besides, as the legion was confined in one, or two men, where was the necessity for their entering all the herds of swine? Would it not have been more eligible for Jesus to have permitted, or commanded them to have entered into *one* or *two* of the swine, so that these only would then have perished, and which neither I, nor any one else, could have accounted any great injury, considering the great benefit derived therefrom, if the country was actually freed from the demons thereby? whereas the method he pursued, (if for argument's sake I allow the miracle†) will be found

* Levit. xi. 8. and Deut. xiv. 8.

† I cannot forbear taking notice in this place, of what Mr. Swain observes concerning my objection to this miracle; for
he

found not to be the way to free the country from them, as appears from your own account of the miracle: for you say, page 46, "If the devils
 " were not to be left at large, but to be confined
 " and debarred from entering into men, what
 " prerogative or privilege had these herds of swine
 " before other animals, in this or any other coun-
 " try, (especially, as in all probability they were
 " the only ones near at hand) that the devils
 " should not be permitted to enter into them,
 " when to their own cost, they desired it? On
 " the contrary, as with them, and perhaps them
 " only, the effect was, that they ran into the sea
 " and perished in the waters, their being possessed
 " could not have any further ill consequence for
 " other creatures; and they themselves were soon
 " freed from the torture; instead of which, the
 " devils brought upon themselves a punishment,

he says, page 65, "He (the Jew) allows the miracle,
 " but disputes the authority of Christ. In other words, he
 " allows that Christ could work miracles, but denies that they
 " were performed by the power of God." But, here it is
 plain, that Mr. Swain has totally mistaken my meaning: for
 I never allowed the miracle, as may be perceived from my
 observation on the miracles, (page 77, 81,) "That they were
 scarcely *just* or *rational*." I then shewed their injustice and ir-
 rationality; and as it must be allowed, that every miracle per-
 formed by the power of God, must certainly be both *just* and
rational, it is clear, that my intention was to shew, that as
 those miracles contained manifest signs of injustice and irra-
 tionality, unworthy of God, and inconsistent with his attri-
 butes; that consequently, I did not believe, that they ever
 were wrought,

“ which they were afraid of, and wished to avoid,
 “ but whereby the whole continent was once for
 “ all relieved from the fear of so formidable a hel-
 “ lish *legion*.”

But, dear Sir, unless you can clearly and satisfactorily prove, that the drowning of the devils was a punishment that they were afraid of, and that it was the *only* and *best* way to destroy them, and rid the country of them, so that they might no more be able to enter into men, you have done nothing to weaken the force of my objection: and which I apprehend you are unable to do, according to your scheme. What! *to drown a devil* the best way to destroy him! You must surely, Sir, have a very confused notion of devils, if you think they can be destroyed by drowning;—or that they are made of such materials that they cannot swim without cork:—or do you suppose, that the swine were so extraordinary fat and plump, (being fed in Palestine, a land flowing with milk and honey) that their weight made the very devils sink? If you do, I must tell you plainly, that the idea which you have formed concerning what kind of being a devil is, differs widely from what I ever understood from Scripture*, or have read on the subject.

Nay,

* It is worthy of remark, that though Moses in Deut. xxxii. 17. tells us of דִּימִים *Devils*; and in 1 Sam. xxviii. we read of the Witch of Endor, yet, in no part of the Old Testament (as far as I can charge my memory) do we hear of demoniacks. But in the time of Jesus and the Apostles, and for
 some

Nay, from the very passage itself under consideration: for if these demons had power to enter into, and abide in these demoniacks unperceived by the human eye; and also thus suddenly to enter into the whole herds of the swine, it is manifest, they must have been spirits: but you need not rely on my bare word for this; for if you will please to take the trouble to look into Johnson's Dictionary, you will there find, that DEMON denotes *a spirit*; and as he farther observes, generally *an evil one*. Now, I suppose, you need not be told that *a spirit* is an immaterial being, and consequently cannot be drowned, or suffocated in water. I have indeed heard my grand-mother, and other old women, talk of drowning witches; but never in all my life before, did I ever hear, or read of drowning the devil. That great discovery, was undoubtedly reserved for you, Sir, and which may

some centuries after in the primitive church*, there was an astonishing number of them; so that they were almost as numerous as the beggars in our streets at present; though I verily believe, that many of them greatly resembled such of ours as go about with pretended diseases, in order to obtain a livelihood in idleness, rather than by honest industry. However, thanks be to God, and the prevalence of reason, and common sense, we have not for some centuries been troubled with them; except now and then a *Cock-lane ghost*, or a *Tattan taylor*; but then, the demons are not suffered to enter into swine. No! No! the exorcising ministers love pork, and know the value of a *tithe pig* too well, to suffer it to be thus wantonly destroyed.

* Archbishop Tillotson observes, that the particular gift of casting out devils, continued the longest; for which he gives a curious reason. Serm. fol. iii. vol. 3. page 488. Edit. 1735.

justly

justly be reckoned the greatest, and most wonderful discovery of this, or any other age.

As to what Mr. Swain observes, page 67, "Would our author have us reject the miracles of Moses, because they were the occasion of much loss and damage to the Egyptians?" scarcely deserves notice, were it not to expose its absurdity, and at the same time show, what a miserable subterfuge he is obliged to have recourse to, in order to evade the force of my objection. For every one the least conversant in Scripture knows, that THE LOSS and DAMAGE sustained by the Egyptians, was a just punishment upon them, first, for their ill usage of, and cruelty to the Israelites, by the hard labour they forced them to undergo, and the drowning, and otherwise destroying their infants. And, second, for their repeated disobedience to God's word, and their obstinacy in refusing to let them go, according to God's command by Moses. But, this can by no means be said to be the case of the swine, or as I can find, the owners thereof.

As I have already exceeded the limits allotted to this Letter, I must postpone the consideration of your examination of my 5th, and 7th, objections to another opportunity.

I am, Sir,

Your's, &c.

D. LEVI.

A LET-

(411)
A
L E T T E R

T O

MR. SWAIN,

OCCASIONED BY HIS

Examination of Mr. David Levi's Objections,

IN HIS

ANSWER TO DR. PRIESTLEY'S

FIRST LETTERS TO THE JEWS.

BY DAVID LEVI,

AUTHOR OF LINGUA SACRA, THE CEREMONIES OF THE
JEWS, &c.

אני ראשון ואני אחרון ומבלעדי אין אלהים

ISAIAH, xlv. 6.

ואל מי תדמיוני ואשועה ואמר קדוש

Isa. xl. 25.

LETTER TO MR. SWAIN.

REV. SIR,

I Have read your examination of my objections, &c. And in answer thereto, must inform you, that you will find several of the arguments contained in the said examination, noticed in my Letters to Dr. Priestley, &c. in the preceding part of this pamphlet. As to that part which contains the prophecies, it will be duly considered in my Dissertation on the Prophecies; so that I shall at present confine myself to your questions, page 8, viz. 1st. "Whether the doctrine of the Trinity has any foundation in the Old Testament." 2dly, "Whether it is inconsistent with the Unity of the Divine Nature."

As to the first question, it must be remembered, that in my Answer to Dr. Priestley's first Letters to the Jews, I have shewn, that the Old Testament always inculcates a perfect *Unity*, as may be perceived from the passages there quoted, besides a number of others. But, as you have observed, page 11, that "Several passages occur in the Old Testament, in which the plural number is used, though God alone is spoken of." I think it proper to say a few words in answer thereto. In the first place, if you were at all acquainted with the

the sacred language, you would have known, 1st, that the *verb* is sometimes in the *singular**, and the *nominative* in the *plural*; and sometimes the *verb* in the *plural*, and the *nominative* in the *singular*. Sometimes the *verb* is in the *feminine*, and the *substantive* in the *masculine*. 2d. An *adjective singular* †, is sometimes joined to a *substantive plural*; besides a number of others of the like import, that are peculiar to the Hebrew. And had you been acquainted with it, you would not then have written in the manner you have, page 11. for you there say, “Would it not, moreover, have been an impropriety in the language of Moses, in books, and in a revelation intended to establish the unity of the Godhead in opposition to idolatry, or a plurality of gods, to make use of such expressions in speaking of the Creator of all things, as imply more than one, if there were no foundation for such expressions?” Now I think, I have shewn by the foregoing rules, that the language of Moses does not countenance or imply the existence of any more than one. And if some one that is intirely ignorant of the language, in which Moses wrote, should fancy to take it into his head to draw such conclusions from it; is Moses to be blamed for it, any more than a man is for planting a tree, because some madman was pleased to hang himself on it? I know there are several, who, in order to establish the doctrine of the Tri-

* See the Syntax, in *Lingua Sacra*, chap. xv. sect. 1st. page 364.

† Ibid.

nity from the Old Testament, observe that אֱלֹהִים is a plural noun; but in *Lingua Sacra*, radix אֱלֹה, I have shewn what is the true sense of it. However, if I should for argument's sake allow, that this noun, or your verb, (Gen. i. 26.) implies a plurality, the doctrine of the Trinity, would by no means be established thereby: for what proof can you, or any other produce, that a *plurality* denotes a *Trinity*, and *no more*? I may as well say, that it implies *two, two hundred, two thousand*, and so on *ad infinitum*: so that to establish a plurality, is in truth, establishing POLYTHEISM.

But as you observe, page 18, “ There are
 “ many places in the Old Testament, in which a
 “ person is spoken of, to whom the honours,
 “ works, worship, and titles of God are ascribed,
 “ yet in a manner, that implies a distinction, or
 “ some kind of difference.” I shall take notice
 of a few of them, the limits of this letter not admitting of the whole; neither do I think it necessary; for as they are all built on the same mistaken principles, the confuting of one, is confuting of all.

Gen. xxi. 17. “ And God heard the voice of
 “ the lad; and the angel of God called to Hagar
 “ out of heaven, and said unto her, What aileth
 “ thee, Hagar? Fear not; for God hath heard the
 “ voice of the lad where he is. Arise, lift up the
 “ lad, and hold him in thine hand, for I will make
 “ him a great nation.” On this passage you observe, *Ibid.* “ God and the angel of God are
 “ spoken

“ spoken of as distinguished, and yet the authority
 “ and power is ascribed to the angel—I, says the
 “ angel, *will make him a great nation*. Two in name,
 “ but one in power and authority.” So this, Sir,
 is the proof, that the angel is God, and God is
 the angel; two in name, but one in power: this
 is a curious discovery, and which I never heard of
 before. For though angels are sometimes in a
 figurative sense called אֱלֹהִים, yet, do we never
 find in any part of the Old Testament, that God
 is called מַלְאָךְ *Angel*. The reason is obvious; for
 as מַלְאָךְ (derived from the radix לָאָךְ) in its pri-
 mary sense, denotes *a messenger**: the angels are so
 called, because they are sent on messages by God.
 And this was the case here; for it first says, *And
 God heard the voice of the lad*; it does not say, the
 angel heard the voice of the lad, but God, and
 then we find that *the angel* (or more properly the
 messenger) of God called to Hagar out of heaven.
 And thus he continues speaking in the character
 of a messenger: for he says, *Fear not; for God
 hath heard the voice of the lad, where he is*. And
 therefore, when he says, *for I will make him a great
 nation*; it is evident, that he was speaking in

* And thus is מַלְאָךְ properly translated in Hagg. i. 13. and מַלְאָכֹת derived from the same root, a message. “ Then spoke Haggai the LORD’s messenger in the Lord’s message unto the people, saying, I am with you saith the Lord.” This is just as the angel said to Abraham, in your second example, on which you pretend to lay so much stress; but which I shall shew to be nugatory.

God's name : for thus God himself said to Abraham, verse 13, "And also of the son of the bond-woman will *I* make a nation." And in the same manner does the angel express himself in your second example, Ibid. xxii. 15. *The angel of the Lord called unto Abraham the second time, and said, by myself I have sworn, saith the Lord.* On this passage you observe, "To the LORD, and "the ANGEL OF THE LORD, thus distinguished by "name, is the same power and authority again "attributed." But, is it possible that a minister of the Gospel should thus attempt to pervert the true sense of Scripture, in so bare-faced a manner? For what power and authority, I must ask you, is here attributed to the angel, any more than to a common messenger? "By MYSELF I HAVE "SWORN, saith the Lord." Hence it is manifest, that the angel did not swear, but only told Abraham, that the Lord had sworn by *himself*. And which, I think, makes intirely against your hypothesis; for the angel does not say by *ourselves have we sworn*; but that the Lord said, that HE had sworn by *himself*. Hence it is manifest, from the express words of the angel, no power or authority is attributed to him, but, on the contrary, is simply considered as a messenger of Jehovah: and I insist upon it, that whoever attempts to draw a conclusion from thence, that the same power and authority is therein attributed to the Lord, and the angel of the Lord, shews either a weak head, or a bad heart.

The

The same objection lies against your other examples ; consequently, it would be spending of time to no purpose to go over them ; but in doing which, my folly in combating them, might appear as conspicuous, as yours in urging of them. However, I can by no means avoid taking notice of one more, which seems to be your sheet anchor, in order to expose the grossness of its absurdity, and the bare-faced misapplication of the true sense of Scripture, which your conclusions from thence contain. This, perhaps, you will say, is harsh language ; but desperate disorders must have desperate remedies ; and this is no mean case, it is the honour of Jehovah, whose name hath been profaned among the nations ; it is my zeal for the Lord of hosts, that obliges me to make use of strong language.

You observe, (page 20,) “ If it should be said, “ that God, Lord, and the angel of God, are “ in every respect synonymous, and that no difference of personality can be fairly collected from “ thence, let Exod. xxiii. 20. 23. xxxii. 34. xxxiii. “ 14. be consulted.” Surely, Sir, you must have considered your readers as no better than *beads* of onions, when you wrote this : for what person possessed of common sense is there, that does not know, *God, Lord, and the angel of God, are not in every respect synonymous ? and that there is a difference of personality ?* Nay, so great a difference that GOD denotes THE CREATOR, and

ANGEL

ANGEL OF GOD, A CREATURE, the work of his hands, and his servant, and messenger.

I shall examine what you say concerning the examples. You say, (page 20,) “ In the first of
 “ these passages, (Exod. xxiii. 20, &c.) the Lord
 “ says, Behold, I send an angel before thee, to
 “ keep thee in the way—beware of him, and obey
 “ his voice, provoke him not; for he will not
 “ pardon your transgressions; for my name is in
 “ him. But if thou wilt indeed obey his voice,
 “ and do all that I speak, then I will be an ene-
 “ my to thine enemies, and an adversary to thine
 “ adversaries. For mine angel shall go before
 “ thee, and bring thee in.” On this long quo-
 tation, you make the following curious observa-
 tion. “ What can any one make of this passage?
 “ —Here are evidently two mentioned, one that
 “ sends, and the other that is sent; the latter cal-
 “ led *angel*, *the angel of God*; *mine angel*, empha-
 “ tically so stiled, and concerning whom it is de-
 “ clared *my name is in him*.” Now, Sir, give me
 leave, in my turn, to ask, What can any one
 make of this passage? Why, nothing more than
 that God tells Moses and the people, that he
 will send his angel before him, to keep him in
 the way, &c. And therefore God commands them
 to obey his voice, and not provoke him; and for
 which he immediately gives the reasons, *for he will*
not pardon your transgressions; i. e. it is not in his
 power to pardon, because he is but a servant: but
 then

then, *my name is in him*; that is, whatever he says unto you, you must be obedient to; because *my name is in him*; i. e. what he says, is in MY NAME, by my particular order and command. And as a demonstration of the truth of this explanation, God says farther, *But if thou wilt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak*, not all that he speaks, but all that I speak, for he only speaks in my name, *then will I be an enemy to thine enemies, &c.* Here God says again, *I will be an enemy, &c.* And thus he expresses himself at the end of verse 23, *and I will cut them off.* Hence it is also manifest, that in this passage God took the most effectual care to guard them against idolatry: for he informed them, that the messenger sent, had not power to pardon their transgressions, nor to reward their obedience; and therefore, they were to consider him in no other light, than his angel, (*or messenger,*) and hence we may also perceive the propriety of the subsequent verse, where God warns them from bowing down to the gods of the Canaanites, &c. As to the expression *mine angel*, I think it is clear, that no other inference can be drawn from it, than that the angel was so called, the same as all other creatures are called God's creatures, because they are all created by him, and when sent on a message by him, are called his messengers. Suppose now, Mr. Swain was to tell a person, whom he wanted to direct to a certain place, "I will send *my servant* to shew you the way to —," and that person was to infer from thence,

thence, that Mr. Swain, and the servant spoken of to be sent, was one and the same person. I am fully persuaded that, Mr. Swain would look on that person to be either a fool, or a madman. From all which it is demonstrable, that the passages afore cited do not countenance the supposition of a plurality of persons in the Godhead*. And I am confident that whoever holds such plurality, violates the second great commandment, THOU SHALT HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME. Having already exceeded the proposed limits of this Letter, I must postpone the consideration of your second question to another opportunity; and subscribe myself,

Sir,

Your most obedient humble servant,

D. LEVI.

* According to your mode of reasoning, when Moses speaks in the person of God, and says, I did, or will do so and so, &c. or ye shall keep my statutes, &c. we are to infer from thence a plurality of persons in the Godhead. This, I doubt not, you would be the first to explode for its absurdity; but I must tell you plainly, that the absurdity of this scheme, is not greater than that of yours: and therefore, if you cannot produce better arguments in support of the doctrine of the Trinity than you have done; I cannot help remarking, that you have then done more real injury to it, than its most bitter-enemies could do.

A LETTER

A
L E T T E R

TO

Anti-Socinus, alias Anselm Bayly,

OCCASIONED BY HIS

R E M A R K S

ON

MR. DAVID LEVI'S ANSWER

TO

Dr. Priestley's First Letters to the Jews.

BY DAVID LEVI,

AUTHOR OF LINGUA SACRA, THE CEREMONIES OF THE
JEWS, &c.

בגדים בגדו ובגד בומדים בגדו

ISAIAH XXIV. 16

A

LETTER TO ANTI-SOCINUS,

ALIAS

ANSELM BAYLY.

DREAD SIR,

WITH the utmost submissiveness, I presume to address a few lines to you, concerning your Remarks on my Letters to Dr. Priestley: but which, I sincerely hope, will not be the cause of arousing you from a state of calmness, serenity, and pleasing self-meditation, to a state of *resentiments*, reproofs, documents, refreshing breezes, animation, light and fire*. At any rate, it shall not be my fault, as I shall studiously avoid saying any thing, that may induce you to put that dreadful threat, contained in the following paragraph, into execution. O! that dreadful sentence! I know not how to transcribe it; the bare mention of it, has thrown me into a tremour, so that my hand can scarcely do its office; I wish it was once well over: however, I will summon up all my strength and try. "I would not (page 53,) have used "sharpness towards you, for the love I bear "you." This is kind: it is balm: it is comfort to my spirits: but alas! the cup is soon dashed from my lips, by what follows. "Had you not

* Remarks on Mr. Levi's second Letter, page 49.

"used

used audaciousness and contempt towards my
 " Lord and Master, whom and whose cause I
 " regard more than property, honours, and life
 " itself. I hope you will ask his pardon, or at
 " least, evermore be silent before him—on these
 " conditions only, I remain your friend, firmer
 " than ever: but if you offer again to touch his
 " NAME, WORD, and CHARACTER, with profane
 " lips and profane hands, I will tear you to pieces,
 " you and your *Sacra Lingua**."

Ah! wo is me, alas! for the day that I was
 born! How shall I escape this dreadful sentence?
 For dread Sir, I am afraid, I must plead guilty:
 for that " crafty, naked, sly serpent of old†," as
 you are pleased to call him, has again beguiled
 me, and drawn me in to do, what you had so
 strictly forbidden me doing, by his second Let-
 ters to the Jews, in which he has arraigned my
 want of candour, &c. This, induced these pro-
 fane hands of mine, to pen an answer thereto; and
 which I much fear, has undone me. But what
 is worse, as I apprehend, is, that several good
 and zealous Christians, have been accessory, in
 aiding, assisting, and abetting me thereto, by
 commenting and remarking on those Letters of
 mine to Dr. Priestley. Whether you will be

* It is to be supposed, that passion had almost choaked and
 blinded poor Anti-Socinus; so that instead of saying properly,
Lingua Sacra, he wrote, *Sacra Lingua*. Or perhaps, like
 the witches, who say their prayers backwards.

† Dr. Priestley.

pleased to account them, as accessaries before, or after the fact, and in either case, admit me as an evidence against them, by which means, I and my dear *Lingua Sacra*, may escape the so-much dreaded sentence, rests in your *august* breast, to whose clemency I now submit. But, dread Sir, if you should not be pleased to exercise that clemency, (which heaven avert) by granting the remission of my punishment for this crime, What will then become of me? But why do I talk thus? It is not my own fate I deplore; it is not for myself I feel: it is for my darling child, who I find is to be involved in the guilt of its parent: it is there I am wounded; there I feel the pangs of a parent. As for me, you may darken my *day lights*, (page 50,) tear me to pieces with your nails and teeth; but spare, O spare! my poor offspring, my dear *Lingua Sacra*: it is for the fate of that darling of my soul, in whom all my joys are treasured up, that my heart bleeds! As you are a parent* yourself, I am sure you must be sensible what a fond parent must feel for a darling child, on such an occasion. Do but assure me, that the dear innocent thing shall be safe, and I will chearfully submit to your decision without a murmur. But, dread Sir, wherein could that dear child of mine have offended you? I hope, it is not meant to carry your resentment so far, as to punish the innocent babe, because, its father hath been naught,

* An author.

if it has been faulty, give it due, and wholesome correction, (for I know that thou canst well wield the birchen rod*;) but do not put it to a violent death.

But, methinks I hear you say, is it not equally as wicked and profane, as its guilty father? For in the first place, does it not clearly prove, that *Elohim* is *not* a plural appellative. Second, does it not likewise prove that עלמה does not denote a virgin, but a young woman; besides several other profane subjects of the same nature, and import, as the sceptre departing from Judah, &c. &c. And dare you now have the effrontery to ask me wherein it hath offended? I tell thee, that both you, and your detested offspring, shall feel the utmost vengeance of my fury, if I once get you within my clutches. You, your wicked brat, and Dr. Priestley, that serpent of old, that first drew you in to make scholastic distinctions of the second person in the Trinity, shall be served, as Calvin caused Michael Servetus to be served, as I have mentioned in my preface: in plain English, ye shall all be burnt. This, Sir, is a dreadful sentence indeed! To be burnt alive, is most shocking to the mind! And is there no way to escape the frightful sentence? Is there no friend to intercede? No kind hand to lend its aid? No advocate or counsel, to plead in behalf of me and mine? Alas! what shall I do? Let me pause, and consider. Ha! a sudden thought has struck my mind! relief is near at

* Vide, Monthly Review, for February, 1788.

hand: surely my guardian angel inspired me with it. It is this, I at once appeal from you, and your sentence. And this I am warranted to do by all laws, both human and divine; For none allow a person to be both accuser and judge in his own cause? I now appeal to the tribunal of the impartial and candid public, where I am sure to meet with justice; for thanks be to God, and the civil power of these realms, we are not as in Spain and Portugal, where malicious and spiteful priests, may burn the loyal subjects of the state like faggots. No, Sir, since the reformation, and glorious revolution, these abominable and horrid persecutions have ceased in this country. And that they may cease in every other, and universal love, benevolence, and unanimity take place of them, is the sincere, and most ardent wish of my soul. Amen.

As you are no longer my judge, it is lawful for me, in my turn, to become your accuser. This, Doctor, is a fair retaliation: and retaliation, you know, is one of the precepts of the Mosaical dispensation: for the perpetuity of which I contend. But to the point. In your remarks on my Introductory Letter to Dr. Priestley, (page 17,) you quote my words (from page 4,) thus: "You
" here invited our nation to an amicable discussion
" of the evidences of Christianity." On this you remark, "Here, Mr. Sincere Inquirer after
" Truth, you fib again. It doth not appear that
" Dr. Priestley, in his Letters, invites the Jews to
" any discussion of the evidences of Christianity,
" but

"but to a mere and simple acceptance of it." Now, Sir, I do not accuse you of simply fibbing, but I accuse you before the Majesty of the people, with being guilty of a most shameful, and bare-faced falsehood; which charge contains the following counts. First, For insulting and giving the lye direct to Dr. Priestley, by alledging that he did not write, what he actually did, and thought proper to write. Second, For charging David Levi, with quoting what Dr. Priestley did not write; but which in truth, he, the said Dr. Priestley did write. To this charge, what do you say prisoner at the bar, Guilty, or not guilty? Not guilty. Then we must produce evidence in support of our charge. Read the title to Dr. Priestley's first Letters to the Jews. "Letters to the Jews, INVITING THEM TO AN AMICABLE DISCUSSION OF THE EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY. By Joseph Priestley." Now, foreman of the jury, what say you, Is the prisoner guilty? Guilty, my Lord, of both counts, by uttering and publishing a premeditated, and barefaced falsehood against truth and reason. Nothing remains now, but for the court to pass sentence, and which is, *NOT to bang yourself in a conventicle, or stab yourself with the sharp end of a stylus, as you insinuate Dr. Priestley ought to do. But to live, and repent of your follies, is the sincere wish of your much injured friend.*

DAVID LEVI.

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